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CHARLES DICKENS

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
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SUNDAY

UNDER THREE HEADS

AND OTHER SKETCHES

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

Dedication.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE BISHOP OF LONDON.

My Lord,—

You were among the first, some years ago, to expatiate on the vicious addiction of the lower classes of society to Sunday excursions, and were thus instrumental in calling forth occasional demonstrations of those extreme opinions on the subject, which are very generally received with derision, if not with contempt.

Your elevated station, my Lord, affords you countless opportunities of increasing the comforts and pleasures of the humbler classes of society—not by the expenditure of the smallest portion of your princely income, but by merely sanctioning, with the influence of your example, their harmless pastimes and innocent recreations.

That your Lordship would ever have contemplated Sunday recreations with so much horror if you had been at all acquainted with the wants and necessities of the people who indulged in them, I cannot imagine possible. That a Prelate of your elevated rank has the faintest conception of the extent of those wants, and the nature of those necessities, I do not believe.

For these reasons I venture to address this little pamphlet to your Lordship's consideration. I am quite conscious that the outlines I have drawn afford but a very imperfect description of the feelings they were intended to illustrate, but I claim for them one merit—their truth and freedom from exaggeration. I may have fallen short of the mark, but I have never overshot it; and, while I have pointed out what appears to me to be injustice on the part of others, I hope I have carefully abstained from committing it myself.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

TIMOTHY SPARKS.

June, 1836.

SUNDAY UNDER THREE HEADS.

I.

AS IT IS.

THERE are few things from which I derive greater pleasure than walking through some of the principal streets of London on a fine Sunday in summer, and watching the cheerful faces of the lively groups with which they are thronged. There is something—to my eyes, at least—exceedingly pleasing in the general desire evinced by the humbler classes of society to appear neat and clean on this their only holiday. There are many grave old persons, I know, who shake their heads with an air of profound wisdom, and tell you that poor people dress too well nowadays; that when they were children, folks knew their stations in life better; that, you may depend upon it, no good will come of this sort of thing in the end; and so forth. But I fancy I can discern, in the fine bonnet of the working man's wife, or the feather-bedizened hat of his child, no inconsiderable evidence of good feeling on the part of the man himself, and an affectionate desire to expend the few shillings he can spare from his week's wages in improving the appearance and adding to the happiness of those who are nearest and dearest to him. This may be a very heinous and unbecoming degree of vanity, perhaps, and the money might possibly be applied to better uses; it must not be forgotten, however, that it might very easily be devoted to worse, and if two or three faces can be rendered happy and contented by a trifling improvement of outward appearance, I cannot help thinking that the object is very cheaply purchased, even at the expense of a smart gown or a gaudy riband. There is a great deal of very unnecessary cant about the over-dressing of the common people. There is not a manufacturer or tradesman in existence who would not employ a man who takes a reasonable degree of pride in the appearance of himself and those about him, in preference to a sullen slovenly fellow who works doggedly on, regardless of his own clothing and that of his wife and children, and seeming to take pleasure or pride in nothing.

The pampered aristocrat, whose life is one continued round of licentious pleasures and sensual gratification, or the gloomy enthusiast who detests the cheerful amusements he can never enjoy, and envies the healthy feelings he can never know, and who would put down the one and suppress the other, until he made the minds of his fellow-beings as besotted and distorted as his own—neither of these men can by any possibility form an adequate notion of what Sunday really is to those whose lives are spent in sedentary or laborious occupations, and who are accustomed to look forward to it through their whole existence as their only day of rest from toil, and innocent enjoyment.

The sun that rises over the quiet streets of London on a bright Sunday morning shines till his setting on gay and happy faces. Here and there, as early as six o'clock, a young man and woman in their best attire may be seen hurrying along on their way to the house of some acquaintance, who is included in their scheme of pleasure for the day, from whence, after stopping to take "a bit of breakfast," they sally forth accompanied by several old people and a whole crowd of young ones, bearing large hand-baskets full of provisions, and Belcher handkerchiefs done up in bundles, with the neck of a bottle sticking out at the top, and closely-packed apples bulging out at the sides; and away they hurry along the streets leading to the steam-packet wharves, which are already plentifully sprinkled with parties bound for the same destination.

Their good-humour and delight know no bounds, for it is a delightful morning, all blue overhead, and nothing like a cloud in the whole sky; and even the air of the river at London Bridge is something to them, shut up as they have been all the week in close streets and heated rooms. There are dozens of steamers to all sorts of places—Gravesend, Greenwich, and Richmond—and such numbers of people, that when you have once sat down on the deck it is all but a moral impossibility to get up again—to say nothing of walking about, which is entirely out of the question. Away they go, joking and laughing, and eating and drinking, and admiring everything they see, and pleased with everything they hear, to climb Windmill Hill and catch a glimpse of the rich corn-fields and beautiful orchards of Kent; or to stroll among the fine old trees of Greenwich Park, and survey the wonders of Shooter's Hill, and Lady James's Folly; or to glide past the beautiful meadows of Twickenham and Richmond,

and to gaze with a delight which only people like them can know, on every lovely object in the fair prospect around. Boat follows boat, and coach succeeds coach, for the next three hours; but all are filled, and all with the same kind of people—neat and clean, cheerful and contented.

They reach their places of destination, and the taverns are crowded; but there is no drunkenness or brawling, for the class of men who commit the enormity of making Sunday excursions, take their families with them, and this in itself would be a check upon them, even if they were inclined to dissipation, which they really are not. Boisterous their mirth may be, for they have all the excitement of feeling that fresh air and green fields can impart to the dwellers in crowded cities, but it is innocent and harmless. The glass is circulated, and the joke goes round; but the one is free from excess, and the other from offence, and nothing but good humour and hilarity prevails.

In streets like Holborn and Tottenham Court Road, which form the central market of a large neighbourhood, inhabited by a vast number of mechanics and poor people, a few shops are open at an early hour of the morning; and a very poor man, with a thin and sickly woman by his side, may be seen with their little basket in hand, purchasing the scanty quantity of necessaries they can afford, which the time at which the man received his wages, or his having a good deal of work to do, or the woman's having been out charing till a late hour, prevented their procuring overnight. The coffee-shops, too, at which clerks and young men employed in counting-houses can procure their breakfasts, are also open. This class comprises, in a place like London, an enormous number of people, whose limited means prevent their engaging for their lodgings any other apartment than a bed-room, and who have consequently no alternative but to take their breakfasts at a coffee-shop, or go without it altogether. All these places, however, are quickly closed, and by the time the church bells begin to ring, all appearance of traffic has ceased. And then, what are the signs of immorality that meet the eye? Churches are well filled, and Dissenters' chapels are crowded to suffocation. There is no preaching to empty benches, while the drunken and dissolute populace run riot in the streets.

Here is a fashionable church, where the service commences at a late hour, for the accommodation of such members of the congregation—and they are not a few—as may happen to have lingered at the opera far into the morning of the Sabbath, an excellent contrivance for poising the balance between God and Mammon, and illustrating the ease with which a man's duties to both may be accommodated and adjusted. How the carriages rattle up, and deposit their richly-dressed burdens beneath the lofty portico! The powdered footmen glide along the aisle, place the richly-bound prayer-books on the pew-desks, slam the doors, and hurry away, leaving the fashionable members of the congregation to inspect each other through their glasses, and to dazzle and glitter in the eyes of the few shabby people in the free seats. The organ peals forth, the hired singers commence a short hymn, and the congregation condescendingly rise, stare about them, and converse in whispers. The clergyman enters the reading-desk — a young man of noble family and elegant demeanour, notorious at Cambridge for his knowledge of horseflesh and dancers, and celebrated at Eaton for his hopeless stupidity. The service commences. Mark the soft voice in which he reads, and the impressive manner in which he applies his white hand, studded with brilliants, to his perfumed hair. Observe the graceful emphasis with which he offers up the prayers for the King, the Royal Family, and all the nobility; and the nonchalance with which he hurrries over the more uncomfortable portions of the service, the seventh commandment, for instance—with a studied regard for the taste and feeling of his auditors, only to be equalled by that displayed by the sleek divine who succeeds him, who murmurs, in a voice kept down by rich feeding, most comfortable doctrines for exactly twelve minutes, and then arrives at the anxiously expected "Now to God!" which is the signal for the dismissal of the congregation. The organ is again heard; those who have been asleep wake up, and those who have kept awake smile and seem greatly relieved; bows and congratulations are exchanged, the livery servants are all bustle and commotion, bang go the steps, up jump the footmen, and off rattle the carriages, the inmates discoursing on the dresses of the congregation, and congratulating themselves on having set so excellent an example to the community in general, and Sunday pleasures in particular.

Enter a less orthodox place of religious worship, and observe the contrast. A small close chapel with a whitewashed wall, and plain deal pews and pulpit, contains a closely-packed congregation, as different in dress as they are opposed in manner to that we have just quitted. The hymn is sung—not by paid singers, but by the whole assembly at the loudest pitch of their voices, unaccompanied by any musical instrument, the words being given out, two lines at a time, by the clerk. There is something in the sonorous quavering of the harsh voices, in the lank and hollow faces of the men, and the sour solemnity of the women, which bespeaks this a stronghold of intolerant zeal and ignorant enthusiasm.

The preacher enters the pulpit. He is a coarse hard-faced man of forbidding aspect, clad in rusty black, and bearing in his hand

a small plain Bible, from which he selects some passage for his text while the hymn is concluding. The congregation fall upon their knees, and are hushed into profound silence as he delivers an extempore prayer, in which he calls upon the Sacred Founder of the Christian faith to bless his ministry, in terms of disgusting and impious familiarity not to be described. He begins his oration in a drawling tone, and his hearers listen with silent attention. He grows warmer as he proceeds with his subject, and his gesticulation becomes proportionately violent. He clenches his fists, beats the book upon the desk before him, and swings his arms wildly about his head.

The congregation murmur their acquiescence in his doctrines, and a short groan occasionally bears testimony to the moving nature of his eloquence. Encouraged by these symptoms of approval, and working himself up to a pitch of enthusiasm amounting almost to frenzy, he denounces Sabbath breakers with the direst vengeance of offended Heaven. He stretches his body half out of the pulpit, thrusts forth his arms with frantic gestures, and blasphemously calls upon the Deity to visit with eternal torments those who turn aside from the word, as interpreted and preached by—himself. A low moaning is heard; the women rock their bodies to and fro, and wring their hands; the preacher's fervour increases, the perspiration starts upon his brow; his face is flushed, and he clenches his hands convulsively as he draws a hideous and appalling picture of the horrors preparing for the wicked in a future state. A great excitement is visible among his hearers. A scream is heard, and some young girl falls senseless on the floor. There is a momentary rustle, but it is only for a moment—all eyes are turned towards the preacher. He pauses, passes his handkerchief across his face, and looks complacently round. His voice resumes its natural tone, as with mock humility he offers up a thanksgiving for having been successful in his efforts, and having been permitted to rescue one sinner from the path of evil. He sinks back into his seat, exhausted with the violence of his ravings. The girl is removed, a hymn is sung, a petition for some measure for securing the better observance of the Sabbath, which has been prepared by the good man, is read; and his worshipping admirers struggle who shall be the first to sign it.

But the morning service has concluded, and the streets are again crowded with people. Long rows of cleanly-dressed charity children, preceded by a portly beadle and a withered schoolmaster, are returning to their welcome dinner; and it is evident from the number of men with beer-trays, who are running from house to house, that no inconsiderable portion of the population are about to take theirs at this early hour. The bakers' shops, in the humbler suburbs especially, are filled with men, women, and children, each anxiously waiting for the Sunday dinner. Look at the group of children who surround that working man, who has just emerged from the baker's shop at the corner of the street with the reeking dish, in which a diminutive joint of mutton simmers above a vast heap of half-browned potatoes. How the young rogues clap their hands, and dance round their father for very joy at the prospect of the feast; and how anxiously the youngest and chubbiest of the lot lingers on tiptoe by his side, trying to peep into the interior of the dish! They turn up the street, and the chubby-faced boy trots on, as fast as his little legs will carry him, to herald the approach of the dinner to "Mother," who is standing with a baby in her arms on the doorstep, and who seems almost as pleased with the whole scene as the children themselves; whereupon "baby," not precisely understanding the importance of the business in hand, but clearly perceiving that it is something unusually lively, kicks and crows most lustily, to the unspeakable delight of all the children and both the parents. And the dinner is borne into the house amidst a shouting of small voices and jumping of fat legs, which would fill Sir Andrew Agnew with astonishment. As well it might, seeing that baronets, generally speaking, eat pretty comfortable dinners all the week through, and cannot be expected to understand what people feel, who only have a meat dinner on one day out of every seven.

The bakings being all duly consigned to their respective owners, and the beer-man having gone his rounds, the church bells ring for afternoon service, the shops are again closed, and the streets are more than ever thronged with people; some who have not been to church in the morning, going to it now; others who have been to church, going out for a walk; and others—let us admit the full measure of their guilt—going for a walk, who have not been to church at all. I am afraid the smart servant-of-all-work, who has been loitering at the corner of the square for the last ten minutes, is one of the latter class. She is evidently waiting for somebody, and though she may have made up her mind to go to church with him one of these mornings, I don't think they have any such intention on this particular afternoon. Here he is at last. The white trousers, blue coat, and yellow waistcoat—and more especially that cock of the hat—indicate, as surely as inanimate objects can, that Chalk Farm, and not the parish church, is their destination. The girl colours up, and puts out her hand with very awkward affectation of indifference. He gives it a gallant squeeze, and away they walk arm in arm, the girl just looking back towards her "place" with an air of

conscious self-importance, and nodding to her fellow-servant, who has gone up to the two pair of stairs window, to take a full view of "Mary's young man," which being communicated to William, he takes off his hat to the fellow-servant, a proceeding which affords unmitigated satisfaction to all parties, and impels the fellow-servant to inform Miss Emily, confidentially, in the course of the evening, "that the young man as Mary keeps company with, is one of the most genteelest young men as ever she see."

The two young people who have just crossed the road, and are following this happy couple down the street, are a fair specimen of another class of Sunday pleasurers. There is a dapper smartness, struggling through very limited means, about the young man, which induces one to set him down at once as a junior clerk to a tradesman or attorney. The girl no one could possibly mistake. You may tell a young woman in the employment of a large dressmaker at any time, by a certain neatness of cheap finery and humble following of fashion, which pervade her whole attire; but, unfortunately, there are other tokens not to be misunderstood — the pale face with its hectic bloom, the slight distortion of form which no artifice of dress can wholly conceal, the unhealthy stoop, and the short cough— the effect of hard work and close application to a sedentary employment upon a tender frame. They turn towards the fields. The girl's countenance brightens, and an unwonted glow rises in her face. They are going to Hampstead or Highgate, to spend their holiday afternoon in some place where they can see the sky, the fields, and trees, and breathe for an hour or two the pure air, which so seldom plays upon that poor girl's form or exhilarates her spirits.

I would to God that the iron-hearted man who would deprive such people as these of their only pleasures, could feel the sinking of heart and soul, the wasting exhaustion of mind and body, the utter prostration of present strength and future hope, attendant upon that incessant toil which lasts from day to day, and from month to month, that toil which is too often protracted until the silence of midnight, and resumed with the first stir of morning. How marvellously would his ardent zeal for other men's souls diminish after a short probation, and how enlightened and comprehensive would his views of the real object and meaning of the institution of the Sabbath become!

The afternoon is far advanced—the parks and public drives are crowded. Carriages, gigs, phaetons, stanhopes, and vehicles of every description, glide smoothly on. The promenades are filled with loungers on foot, and the road is thronged with loungers on horseback. Persons of every class are crowded together, here, in one dense mass. The plebeian, who takes his pleasure on no day but Sunday, jostles the patrician, who takes his from year's end to year's end. You look in vain for any outward signs of profligacy or debauchery. You see nothing before you but a vast number of people, the denizens of a large and crowded city, in the needful and rational enjoyment of air and exercise.

It grows dusk. The roads leading from the different places of suburban resort are crowded with people on their return home, and the sound of merry voices rings through the gradually darkening fields. The evening is hot and sultry. The rich man throws open the sashes of his spacious dining-room, and quaffs his iced wine in splendid luxury. The poor man, who has no room to take his meals in but the close apartment to which he and his family have been confined throughout the week, sits in the tea-garden of some famous tavern, and drinks his beer in content and comfort. The fields and roads are gradually deserted, the crowd once more pour into the streets and disperse to their several homes, and by midnight all is silent and quiet, save where a few stragglers linger beneath the window of some great man's house to listen to the strains of music from within, or stop to gaze upon the splendid carriages which are waiting to convey the guests from the dinner party of an earl.

There is a darker side to this picture, on which, so far from its being any part of my purpose to conceal it, I wish to lay particular stress. In some parts of London, and in many of the manufacturing towns of England, drunkenness and profligacy in their most disgusting forms exhibit in the open streets on Sunday a sad and a degrading spectacle. We need go no farther than St. Giles's or Drury Lane for sights and scenes of a most repulsive nature. Women with scarcely the articles of apparel which common decency requires, with forms bloated by disease and faces rendered hideous by habitual drunkenness; men reeling and staggering along; children in rags and filth; whole streets of squalid and miserable appearance, whose inhabitants are lounging in the public road, fighting, screaming, and swearing —these are the common objects which present themselves in—these are the well-known characteristics of—that portion of London to which I have just referred.

And why is it that all well-disposed persons are shocked, and public decency scandalized, by such exhibitions?

These people are poor—that is, notorious. It may be said that they spend in liquor money with which they might purchase necessaries, and there is no denying the fact; but let it be remembered that, even if they applied every farthing of their earnings in the best possible way, they would still be very, very poor. Their dwellings are necessarily uncomfortable, and, to a certain degree, unhealthy.

Cleanliness might do much, but they are too crowded together; the streets are too narrow, and the rooms too small, to admit of their ever being rendered desirable habitations. They work very hard all the week. We know that the effect of prolonged and arduous labour is to produce, when a period of rest does arrive, a sensation of lassitude, which it requires the application of some stimulus to overcome. What stimulus have they? Sunday comes, and with it a cessation of labour. How are they to employ the day, or what inducement have they to employ it, in recruiting their stock of health? They see little parties or pleasure excursions passing through the streets, but they cannot imitate their example, for they have not the means. They may walk, to be sure, but it is exactly the inducement to walk that they require. If every one of these men knew that by taking the trouble to walk two or three miles he would be enabled to share in a good game of cricket, or some athletic sport, I very much question whether any of them would remain at home.

But you hold out no inducement; you offer no relief from listlessness; you provide nothing to amuse his mind; you afford him no means of exercising his body. Unwashed and unshaven, he saunters moodily about, weary and dejected. In lieu of the wholesome stimulus he might derive from nature, you drive him to the pernicious excitement to be gained from art. He flies to the gin-shop as his only resource; and when, reduced to a worse level than the lowest brute in the scale of creation, he lies wallowing in the kennel, your saintly lawgivers lift up their hands to heaven, and exclaim for a law which shall convert the day intended for rest and cheerfulness into one of universal gloom, bigotry, and persecution.

II.

AS SABBATH BILLS WOULD MAKE IT.

THE provisions of the bill introduced into the House of Commons by Sir Andrew Agnew, and thrown out by that House on the motion for the second reading, on the 18th of May in the present year, by a majority of thirty-two, may very fairly be taken as a test of the length to which the fanatics, of which the honourable baronet is the distinguished leader, are prepared to go. No test can be fairer, because while on the one hand this measure may be supposed to exhibit all that improvement which mature reflection and long deliberation may have suggested, so on the other it may very reasonably be inferred that if it be quite as severe in its provisions, and to the full as partial in its operation, as those which have preceded it and experienced a similar fate, the disease under which the honourable baronet and his friends labour is perfectly hopeless, and beyond the reach of care.

The proposed enactments of the bill are briefly these:—All work is prohibited on the Lord's Day, under heavy penalties, increasing with every repetition of the offence. There are penalties for keeping shops open; penalties for drunkenness; penalties for keeping open houses for entertainment; penalties for being present at any public meeting or assembly; penalties for letting carriages, and penalties for hiring them; penalties for travelling in steamboats, and penalties for taking passengers; penalties on vessels commencing their voyage on Sunday; penalties on owners of cattle who suffer them to be driven on the Lord's Day; penalties on constables who refuse to act, and penalties for resisting them when they do. In addition to these trifles, the constables are invested with arbitrary, vexatious, and most extensive powers; and all this in a bill which sets out with a hypocritical and canting declaration that "nothing is more acceptable to God than the *true* and *sincere* worship of Him according to His holy writ, and that it is the bounden duty of Parliament to promote the observance of the Lord's Day by protecting every class of society against being required to sacrifice their comfort, health, religious privileges, and conscience, for the convenience, enjoyment, or supposed advantage of any other class on the Lord's Day"! The idea of making a man truly moral through the ministry of constables, and sincerely religious under the influence of penalties, is worthy of the mind which could form such a mass of monstrous absurdity as this bill is composed of.

The House of Commons threw the measure out, certainly, and by so doing retrieved the disgrace—so far as it could be retrieved—of placing among the printed papers of Parliament such an egregious specimen of legislative folly; but there was a degree of delicacy and forbearance about the debate that took place, which I cannot help thinking as unnecessary and uncalled for, as it is unusual, in Parliamentary discussions. If it had been the first time of Sir Andrew Agnew's attempting to palm such a measure upon the country, we might well understand, and duly appreciate, the delicate and compassionate feeling due to the supposed weakness and imbecility of the man, which prevented his proposition being exposed in its true colours, and induced this hon. member to bear testimony to his excellent motives, and that noble lord to regret that he could not—although he had tried to do so—adopt any portion of the bill. But when these attempts have been repeated again and again, when Sir Andrew Agnew has renewed them session after session, and when it has become palpably evident to the whole House that

> "His impudence of proof in every trial,
> Kens no polite, and heeds no plain denial,"

it really becomes high time to speak of him and his legislation, as they appear to deserve, without that gloss of politeness, which is all very well in ordinary cases, but rather out of place when the liberties and comforts of a whole people are at stake.

In the first place, it is by no means the worst characteristic of the bill, that it is a bill of blunders. It is from beginning to end a piece of deliberate cruelty and crafty injustice. If the rich composed the whole population of this country, not a single comfort of one single man would be affected by it. It is directed exclusively, and without the exception of a solitary instance, against the amusements and recreations of the poor. This was the bait held out by the hon. baronet to a body of men who cannot be supposed to have any very strong sympathies in common with the poor, because they cannot understand their sufferings or their struggles. This is the bait which will in time prevail, unless public attention is awakened, and public feeling exerted, to prevent it.

Take the very first clause, the provision that no man shall be allowed to work on Sunday, "That no person, upon the Lord's Day, shall do, or hire, or employ any person

to do any manner of labour, or any work of his or her ordinary calling." What class of persons does this affect? The rich man? No. Menial servants, both male and female, are specially exempted from the operations of the bill. "Menial servants" are among the poor people. The bill has no regard for them. The baronet's dinner must be cooked on Sunday, the bishop's horses must be groomed, and the peer's carriage must be driven. So the menial servants are put utterly beyond the pale of grace—unless, indeed, they are to go to heaven through the sanctity of their masters, and possibly they might think even that rather an uncertain passport.

There is a penalty for keeping open houses of entertainment. Now, suppose the bill had passed, and that half a dozen adventurous licensed victuallers, relying upon the excitement of public feeling on the subject, and the consequent difficulty of conviction (this is by no means an improbable supposition), had determined to keep their houses and gardens open through the whole of Sunday afternoon, in defiance of the law; every act of hiring or working, every act of buying, or selling, or delivering, or causing anything to be bought or sold, is specifically made a separate offence —mark the effect. A party—a man and his wife and children—enter a tea garden, and the informer stations himself in the next box, from whence he can see and hear everything that passes.

"Waiter!" says the father.

"Yes, sir."

"Pint of the best ale."

"Yes, sir."

Away runs the waiter to the bar, and gets the ale from the landlord. Out comes the informer's note-book—penalty on the father for hiring, on the waiter for delivering, and on the landlord for selling, on the Lord's day. But it does not stop here. The waiter delivers the ale and darts off, little suspecting the penalties in store for him.

"Hollo!" cries the father. "Waiter!"

"Yes, sir."

"Just get this little boy a biscuit, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

Off runs the waiter again, and down goes another case of hiring, another case of delivering, and another case of selling; and so it would go on *ad infinitum*, the sum and substance of the matter being that every time a man or woman cried "Waiter!" on Sunday, he or she would be fined not less than forty shillings, nor more than a hundred. And every time a waiter replied "Yes, sir," he and his master would be fined the same amount; with the addition of a new sort of window duty on the landlord—to wit, a tax of twenty shillings an hour for every hour beyond the first one, during which he should have his shutters down on the Sabbath.

With one exception, there are perhaps no clauses in the whole bill so strongly illustrative of its partial operation, and the intention of its framer, as those which relate to travelling on Sundays. Penalties of ten, twenty, and thirty pounds are mercilessly imposed upon coach proprietors who shall run their coaches on the Sabbath; one, two, and ten pounds upon those who hire, or let to hire, horses and carriages upon the Lord's Day; but not one syllable about those who have no necessity to hire, because they have horses and carriages of their own; not one word of a penalty on liveried coachmen and footmen. The whole of the saintly venom is directed against the hired cabriolet, the humble fly, or the rumbling hackney coach, which enables a man of the poorer class to escape for a few hours from the smoke and dirt, in the midst of which he has been confined throughout the week; while the escutcheoned carriage and the dashing cab may whirl their wealthy owners to Sunday feasts andprivate oratorios, setting constables, informers, and penalties at defiance. Again, in the description of the places of public resort which it is rendered criminal to attend on Sunday, there are no words comprising a very fashionable promenade. Public discussions, public debates, public lectures and speeches, are cautiously guarded against; for it is by their means that the people become enlightened enough to deride the last efforts of bigotry and superstition. There is a stringent provision for punishing the poor man who spends an hour in a news-room, but there is nothing to prevent the rich one from lounging away the day in the Zoological Gardens.

There is, in four words, a mock proviso, which affects to forbid travelling "with any animal on the Lord's Day." This, however, is revoked, as relates to the rich man, by a subsequent provision. We have, then, a penalty of not less than fifty nor more than one hundred pounds upon any person participating in the control or having the command of any vessel which shall commence her voyage on the Lord's Day, should the wind prove favourable. The next time this bill is brought forward (which will, no doubt, be at an early period of the next session of Parliament), perhaps it will be better to amend this clause by declaring that, from and after the passing of the Act, it shall be deemed unlawful for the wind to blow at all upon the Sabbath. It would remove a great deal of temptation from the owners and captains of vessels.

The reader is now in possession of the principal enacting clauses of Sir Andrew Agnew's bill, with the exception of one for preventing the killing or taking of "*fish, or other wild animals*," and the ordinary provisions which are inserted for form's sake in all Acts of Parliament. I now beg his attention to the clauses of exemption.

They are two in number. The first exempts menial servants from any rest, and all poor

men from any recreation; outlaws a milkman after nine o'clock in the morning, and makes eating-houses lawful for only two hours in the afternoon; permits a medical man to use his carriage on Sunday, and declares that a clergyman may either use his own, or hire one.

The second is artful, cunning, and designing; shielding the rich man from the possibility of being entrapped, and affecting at the same time to have a tender and scrupulous regard for the interests of the whole community. It declares "that nothing in this Act contained shall extend to works of piety, charity, or necessity."

What is meant by the word "necessity" in this clause? Simply this—that the rich man shall be at liberty to make use of all the splendid luxuries he has collected around him, on any day in the week, because habit and custom have rendered them "necessary" to his existence; but that the poor man, who saves his money to provide some little pleasure for himself and family at lengthened intervals, shall not be permitted to enjoy it. It is not "necessary" to him. Heaven knows he very often goes long enough without it. This is the plain English of the clause. The carriage and pair of horses, the coachman, the footman, the helper, and the groom are "necessary" on Sundays, as on other days, to the bishop and the nobleman; but the hackney coach, the hired gig, or the taxed cart cannot possibly be "necessary" to the working man on Sunday, for he has it not at other times. The sumptuous dinner and the rich wines are "necessaries" to a great man in his own mansion, but the pint of beer and the plate of meat degrade the national character in an eating-house.

Such is the bill for promoting the true and sincere worship of God according to His holy will, and for protecting every class of society against being required to sacrifice their health and comfort on the Sabbath. Instances in which its operation would be as unjust as it would be absurd might be multiplied to an endless amount, but it is sufficient to place its leading provisions before the reader. In doing so, I have purposely abstained from drawing upon the imagination for possible cases. The provisions to which I have referred stand in so many words upon the bill as printed by order of the House of Commons, and they can neither be disowned nor explained away.

Let us suppose such a bill as this to have actually passed both branches of the legislature —to have received the royal assent, and to have come into operation. Imagine its effect in a great city like London.

Sunday comes, and brings with it a day of general gloom and austerity. The man who has been toiling hard all the week has been looking towards the Sabbath, not as to a day of rest from labour and healthy recreation, but as one of grievous tyranny and grinding oppression. The day which his Maker intended as a blessing, man has converted into a curse. Instead of being hailed by him as his period of relaxation, he finds it remarkable only as depriving him of every comfort and enjoyment. He has many children about him, all sent into the world at an early age to struggle for a livelihood. One is kept in a warehouse all day, with an interval of rest too short to enable him to reach home; another walks four or five miles to his employment at the docks; a third earns a few shillings weekly as an errand boy or office messenger; and the employment of the man himself detains him at some distance from his home from morning till night. Sunday is the only day on which they could all meet together, and enjoy a homely meal in social comfort; and now they sit down to a cold and cheerless dinner, the pious guardians of the man's salvation having, in their regard for the welfare of his precious soul, shut up the bakers' shops. The fire blazes high in the kitchen chimney of these well-fed hypocrites, and the rich steams of the savoury dinner scent the air. What care they to be told that this class of men have neither a place to cook in, nor means to bear the expense if they had?

Look into your churches—diminished congregations, and scanty attendance. People have grown sullen and obstinate, and are becoming disgusted with the faith which condemns them to such a day as this once in every seven. And as you cannot make people religious by Act of Parliament, or force them to church by constables, they display their feeling by staying away.

Turn into the streets, and mark the rigid gloom that reigns over everything around. The roads are empty, the fields are deserted, the houses of entertainment are closed. Groups of filthy and discontented-looking men are idling about at the street corners, or sleeping in the sun; but there are no decently dressed people of the poorer class passing to and fro. Where should they walk to? It would take them an hour at least to get into the fields, and, when they reached them, they could procure neither bit nor sup without the informer and penalty. Now and then a carriage rolls smoothly on, or a well-mounted horseman, followed by a liveried attendant, canters by; but with these exceptions all is melancholy and quiet, as if a pestilence had fallen on the city.

Bend your steps through the narrow and thickly-inhabited streets, and observe the sallow faces of the men and women who are lounging at the doors or lolling from the windows. Regard well the closeness of these crowded rooms, and the noisome exhalations that rise from the drains and kennels; and then laud the triumph of religion and morality, which condemns people to drag their lives out in such stews as these, and makes it criminal for them to eat or drink in the fresh air or under the clear sky. Here and there, from

some half-opened window, the loud shout of drunken revelry strikes upon the ear, and the noise of oaths and quarrelling—the effect of the close and heated atmosphere—is heard on all sides. See how the men all rush to join the crowd that are making their way down the street, and how loud the execrations of the mob become as they draw nearer. They have assembled round a little knot of constables who have seized the stock-in-trade, heinously exposed on Sunday, of some miserable walking-stick seller, who follows clamouring for his property. The dispute grows warmer and fiercer, until at last some of the more furious among the crowd rush forward to restore the goods to their owner. A general conflict takes place, the sticks of the constables are exercised in all directions, fresh assistance is procured, and half a dozen of the assailants are conveyed to the station-house, struggling, bleeding, and cursing. The case is taken to the police-office the following morning, and, after a frightful amount of perjury on both sides, the men are sent to prison for resisting officers, their families to the workhouse, to keep them from starving; and there they both remain for a month afterwards, glorious trophies of the sanctified enforcement of the Christian Sabbath. Add to such scenes as these, the profligacy, idleness, drunkenness, and vice that will be committed to an extent which no man can foresee, on Monday, as an atonement for the restraint of the preceding day, and you have a very faint and imperfect picture of the religious effects of this Sunday legislation, supposing it could ever be forced upon the people.

But let those who advocate the cause of fanaticism reflect well upon the probable issue of their endeavours. They may, by perseverance, succeed with Parliament. Let them ponder on the probability of succeeding with the people. You may deny the concession of a political question for a time, and a nation will bear it patiently. Strike home to the comforts of every man's fireside—tamper with every man's freedom and liberty—and one month, one week may rouse a feeling abroad, which a king would gladly yield his crown to quell, and a peer would resign his coronet to allay.

It is the custom to affect a deference for the motives of those who advocate these measures, and a respect for the feelings by which they are actuated. They do not deserve it. If they legislate in ignorance, they are criminal and dishonest; if they do so with their eyes open, they commit wilful injustice—in either case they bring religion into contempt. But they do NOT legislate in ignorance. Public prints and public men have pointed out to them again and again the consequence of their proceedings. If they persist in thrusting themselves forward, let those consequences rest upon their own heads, and let them be content to stand upon their own merits.

It may be asked what motives can actuate a man who has so little regard for the comfort of his fellow-beings, so little respect for their wants and necessities, and so distorted a notion of the beneficence of his Creator. I reply, an envious, heartless, ill-conditioned dislike to seeing those whom fortune has placed below him cheerful and happy—an intolerant confidence in his own high worthiness before God, and a lofty impression of the demerits of others — pride, selfish pride, as inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity itself, as opposed to the example of its Founder upon earth.

To these may be added another class of men—the stern and gloomy enthusiasts, who would make earth a hell, and religion a torment; men who, having wasted the earlier part of their lives in dissipation and depravity, find themselves, when scarcely past its meridian, steeped to the neck in vice, and shunned like a loathsome disease. Abandoned by the world, having nothing to fall back upon, nothing to remember but time misspent and energies misdirected, they turn their eyes and not their thoughts to heaven, and delude themselves into the impious belief that in denouncing the lightness of heart of which they cannot partake, and the rational pleasures from which they never derived enjoyment, they are more than remedying the sins of their old career, and, like the founders of monasteries and builders of churches in ruder days, establishing a good set claim upon their Maker.

III.

AS IT MIGHT BE MADE.

THE supporters of Sabbath Bills, and more especially the extreme class of Dissenters, lay great stress upon the declarations occasionally made by criminals from the condemned cell or the scaffold, that to Sabbath-breaking they attribute their first deviation from the path of rectitude; and they point to these statements as an incontestable proof of the evil consequences which await a departure from that strict and rigid observance of the Sabbath which they uphold. I cannot help thinking that in this, as in almost every other respect connected with the subject, there is a considerable degree of cant, and a very great deal of wilful blindness. If a man be viciously disposed—and, with very few exceptions, not a man dies by the executioner's hands who has not been in one way or other a most abandoned and profligate character for many years—if a man be viciously disposed, there is no doubt that he will turn his Sunday to bad account—that he will take advantage of it to dissipate with other bad characters as vile as himself; and in this way he may trace his first yielding to temptation—possibly his first commission of crime—to an infringement of the Sabbath. But this would be an argument against any holiday at all. If his holiday had been Wednesday instead of Sunday, and he had devoted it to the same improper uses, it would have been productive of the same results. It is too much to judge of the character of a whole people by the confessions of the very worst members of society. It is not fair to cry down things which are harmless in themselves because evil-disposed men may turn them to bad account. Who ever thought of deprecating the teaching poor people to write because some porter in a warehouse had committed forgery? Or into what man's head did it ever enter to prevent the crowding of churches because it afforded a temptation for the picking of pockets?

When the Book of Sports for allowing the peasantry of England to divert themselves with certain games in the open air on Sundays after evening service was published by Charles I., it is needless to say the English people were comparatively rude and uncivilized. And yet it is extraordinary to how few excesses it gave rise even in that day, when men's minds were not enlightened, or their passions moderated, by the influence of education and refinement. That some excesses were committed through its means in the remoter parts of the country, and that it was discontinued in those places in consequence, cannot be denied; but, generally speaking, there is no proof whatever on record of its having had any tendency to increase crime, or to lower the character of the people.

The Puritans of that time were as much opposed to harmless recreations and healthful amusements as those of the present day, and it is amusing to observe that each in their generation advance precisely the same description of arguments. In the British Museum there is a curious pamphlet got up by the Agnews of Charles's time, entitled, "A Divine Tragedie lately acted, or a Collection of sundry Memorable Examples of God's Judgement upon Sabbath-breakers, and other like Libertines in their unlawful Sports, happening within the Realme of England, in the compass only of Two Yeares last past, since the Booke (of Sports) was published, worthy to be knowne and considered of all men, especially such who are guilty of the Sinne or Archpatrons thereof." This amusing document contains some fifty or sixty veritable accounts of balls of fire that fell into churchyards, and upset the sporters, and sporters that quarrelled and upset one another, and so forth; and among them is one anecdote containing an example of a rather different kind, which I cannot resist the temptation of quoting, as strongly illustrative of the fact that this blinking of the question has not even the recommendation of novelty.

"A woman about Northampton, the same day she heard the Booke for Sports read, went immediately, and, having threepence in her purse, hired a fellow to goe to the next towne to fetch a minstrell, who coming, she with others fell a-dancing, which continued within night, at which time shee was got with child, which, at the birth, she murthering, was detected and apprehended, and being convented before the justice, she confessed it, and withal told the occasion of it, saying it was her falling to sport on the Sabbath, upon the reading of the Booke; so as for this treble sinful act, her presumptuous profaning of the Sabbath, which brought her adultory and that murther. Shee was, according to the law of both God and man, put to death. Much sinne and misery followeth upon Sabbath-breaking."

It is needless to say, that if the young lady near Northampton had "fallen to sport" of such a dangerous description, on any other day but Sunday, the first result would probably have been the same, it never having been distinctly shown that Sunday is more

favourable to the propagation of the human race than any other day in the week. The second result—the murder of the child—does not speak very highly for the amiability of her natural disposition; and the whole story, supposing it to have had any foundation at all, is about as much chargeable upon the Book of Sports as upon the Book of Kings. Such "sports" have taken place in dissenting chapels before now; but religion has never been blamed in consequence, nor has it been proposed to shut up the chapels on that account.

The question, then, very fairly arises whether we have any reason to suppose that allowing games in the open air on Sundays, or even providing the means of amusement for the humbler classes of society on that day, would be hurtful and injurious to the character and morals of the people.

I was travelling in the west of England a summer or two back, and was induced by the beauty of the scenery and the seclusion of the spot to remain for the night in a small village, distant about seventy miles from London. The next morning was Sunday, and I walked out towards the church. Groups of people, the whole population of the little hamlet apparently, were hastening in the same direction. Cheerful and good-humoured congratulations were heard on all sides as neighbours overtook each other and walked on in company. Occasionally I passed an aged couple, whose married daughter and her husband were loitering by the side of the old people, accommodating their rate of walking to their feeble pace, while a knot of children hurried on before; stout young labourers in clean round frocks, and buxom girls with healthy laughing faces, were plentifully sprinkled about in couples, and the whole scene was one of quiet and tranquil contentment, irresistibly captivating. The morning was bright and pleasant, the hedges were green and blooming, and a thousand delicious scents were wafted on the air, from the wild flowers which blossomed on either side of the footpath. The little church was one of those venerable simple buildings which abound in the English counties; half overgrown with moss and ivy, and standing in the centre of a little plot of ground, which, but for the green mounds with which it was studded, might have passed for a lovely meadow. I fancied that the old clanking bell, which was now summoning the congregation together, would seem less terrible when it rung out the knell of a departed soul, than I had ever deemed possible before; that the sound would tell only of a welcome to calmness and rest, amidst the most peaceful and tranquil scene in nature.

I followed into the church—a low-roofed building with small arched windows, through which the sun's rays streamed upon a plain tablet on the opposite wall, which had once recorded names, now as undistinguishable on its worn surface as were the bones beneath from the dust into which they had resolved. The impressive service of the Church of England was spoken—not merely *read*—by a grey-headed minister, and the responses delivered by his auditors, with an air of sincere devotion as far removed from affectation or display as from coldness or indifference. The psalms were accompanied by a few instrumental performers, who were stationed in a small gallery extending across the church at the lower end over the door, and the voices were led by the clerk, who, it was evident, derived no slight pride and gratification from this portion of the service. The discourse was plain, unpretending, and well adapted to the comprehension of the hearers. At the conclusion of the service the villagers waited in the churchyard to salute the clergyman as he passed, and two or three, I observed, stepped aside, as if communicating some little difficulty, and asking his advice. This, to guess from the homely bows, and other rustic expressions of gratitude, the old gentleman readily conceded. He seemed intimately acquainted with the circumstances of all his parishioners; for I heard him inquire after one man's youngest child, another man's wife, and so forth; and that he was fond of his joke, I discovered from overhearing him ask a stout fresh-coloured young fellow, with a very pretty bashful-looking girl on his arm, "when those banns were to be put up?"—an inquiry which made the young fellow more fresh-coloured, and the girl more bashful, and which, strange to say, caused a great many other girls who were standing round to colour up also, and look anywhere but in the faces of their male companions.

As I approached this spot in the evening, about half an hour before sunset, I was surprised to hear the hum of voices, and occasionally a shout of merriment, from the meadow beyond the churchyard, which I found, when I reached the stile, to be occasioned by a very animated game of cricket, in which the boys and young men of the place were engaged, while the females and old people were scattered about—some seated on the grass watching the progress of the game, and others sauntering about in groups of two or three, gathering little nosegays of wild roses and hedge flowers. I could not but take notice of one old man in particular, with a bright-eyed granddaughter by his side, who was giving a sunburnt young fellow some instructions in the game, which he received with an air of profound deference, but with an occasional glance at the girl, which induced me to think that his attention was rather distracted from the old gentleman's narration of the fruits of his experience. When it was his turn at the wicket, too, there was a glance towards the pair every now and then, which the

old gentleman very complacently considered as an appeal to his judgment of a particular hit, but which a certain blush in the girl's face, and a downcast look of the bright eye, led me to believe was intended for somebody else than the old man—and understood by somebody else too, or I am much mistaken.

I was in the very height of the pleasure which the contemplation of this scene afforded me, when I saw the old clergyman making his way towards us. I trembled for an angry interruption to the sport, and was almost on the point of crying out, to warn the cricketers of his approach. He was so close upon me, however, that I could do nothing but remain still, and anticipate the reproof that was preparing. What was my agreeable surprise to see the old gentleman standing at the stile, with his hands in his pockets, surveying the whole scene with evident satisfaction. And how dull I must have been not to have known till my friend the grandfather (who, by-the-bye, said he had been a wonderful cricketer in his time) told me that it was the clergyman himself who had established the whole thing —that it was his field they played in, and that it was he who had purchased stumps, bats, ball, and all!

It is such scenes as this I would see near London on a Sunday evening. It is such men as this who would do more in one year to make people properly religious, cheerful, and contented than all the legislation of a century could ever accomplish.

It will be said—it has been very often—that it would be a matter of perfect impossibility to make amusements and exercises succeed in large towns, which may be very well adapted to a country population. Here, again, we are called upon to yield to bare assertions on matters of belief and opinion, as if they were established and undoubted facts. That there is a wide difference between the two cases no one will be prepared to dispute: that the difference is such as to prevent the application of the same principle to both, no reasonable man, I think, will be disposed to maintain. The great majority of the people who make holiday on Sunday now are industrious, orderly, and well-behaved persons. It is not unreasonable to suppose that they would be no more inclined to an abuse of pleasures provided for them, than they are to an abuse of pleasures they provide for themselves; and if any people, for want of something better to do, resort to criminal practices on the Sabbath, as at present observed, no better remedy for the evil can be imagined than giving them the opportunity of doing something which will amuse them and hurt nobody else.

The propriety of opening the British Museum to respectable people on Sunday has lately been the subject of discussion. I think it would puzzle the most austere of the Sunday legislators to assign any valid reason for opposing so sensible a proposition. The Museum contains rich specimens from all the vast museums and repositories of nature, and rare and curious fragments of the mighty works of art in bygone ages, all calculated to awaken contemplation and inquiry, and to tend to the enlightenment and improvement of the people. But attendants would be necessary, and a few men would be employed upon the Sabbath. They certainly would; but how many? Why, if the British Museum, and the National Gallery, and the Gallery of Practical Science, and every other exhibition in London, from which knowledge is to be derived and information gained, were to be thrown open on a Sunday afternoon, not fifty people would be required to preside over the whole; and it would take treble the number to enforce a Sabbath Bill in any three populous parishes.

I should like to see some field, or open piece of ground, in every outskirt of London, exhibiting each Sunday evening on a larger scale, the scene of the little country meadow. I should like to see the time arrive, when a man's attendance to his religious duties might be left to that religious feeling which most men possess in a greater or less degree, but which was never forced into the breast of any man by menace or restraint. I should like to see the time when Sunday might be looked forward to, as a recognized day of relaxation and enjoyment, and when every man might feel, what few men do now, that religion is not incompatible with rational pleasure and needful recreation.

How different a picture would the streets and public places then present! The museums, and repositories of scientific and useful inventions, would be crowded with ingenious mechanics and industrious artisans, all anxious for information, and all unable to procure it at any other time. The spacious saloons would be swarming with practical men; humble in appearance, but destined, perhaps, to become the greatest inventors and philosophers of their age. The labourers who now lounge away the day in idleness and intoxication, would be seen hurrying along, with cheerful faces and clean attire, not to the close and smoky atmosphere of the public house, but to the fresh and airy fields. Fancy the pleasant scene—throngs of people pouring out from the lanes and alleys of the metropolis to various places of common resort, at some short distance from the town, to join in the refreshing sports and exercises of the day; the children gambolling in crowds upon the grass; the mothers looking on and enjoying themselves the little game they seem only to direct; other parties strolling along some pleasant walks, or reposing in the shade of the stately trees; others again intent upon their different amusements. Nothing should be heard on all sides but the sharp stroke of the bat as it sent the ball skimming along the ground, the clear ring of

the quoit, as it struck upon the iron peg; the noisy murmur of many voices, and the loud shout of mirth and delight, which would awaken the echoes far and wide, till the fields rung with it. The day would pass away in a series of enjoyments which would awaken no painful reflections when night arrived, for they would be calculated to bring with them only health and contentment. The young would lose that dread of religion which the sour austerity of its professors too often inculcates in youthful bosoms; and the old would find less difficulty in persuading them to respect its observances. The drunken and dissipated, deprived of any excuse for their misconduct, would no longer excite pity, but disgust. Above all, the more ignorant and humble class of men, who now partake of many of the bitters of life, and taste but few of its sweets, would naturally feel attachment and respect for that code of morality which, regarding the many hardships of their station, strove to alleviate its rigours and endeavoured to soften its asperity.

This is what Sunday might be made, and what it might be made without impiety or profanation. The wise and beneficent Creator who places men upon earth requires that they shall perform the duties of that station of life to which they are called, and He can never intend that the more a man strives to discharge those duties the more he shall be debarred from happiness and enjoyment. Let those who have six days in the week for all the world's pleasures appropriate the seventh to fasting and gloom, either for their own sins or those of other people, if they like to bewail them; but let those who employ their six days in a worthier manner devote their seventh to a different purpose. Let divines set the example of true morality, preach it to their flocks in the morning, and dismiss them to enjoy true rest in the afternoon; and let them select for their text, and let Sunday legislators take for their motto, the words which fell from the lips of that Master, whose precepts they misconstrue, and whose lessons they pervert—

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man to serve the Sabbath."

SKETCHES

OF

YOUNG GENTLEMEN

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

TO THE YOUNG LADIES

OF THE

UNITLD KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,

ALSO

THE YOUNG LADIES

OF

THE PRINCIPALITY OF WALES,

AND LIKEWISE

THE YOUNG LADIES

RESIDENT IN THE ISLES OF

GUERNSEY, JERSEY, ALDERNEY, AND SARK,

The Humble Dedication of their Devoted Admirer

SHEWETH,—

That your Dedicator has perused, with feelings of virtuous indignation, a work purporting to be "Sketches of Young Ladies;" written by Quiz, illustrated by Phiz, and published in one volume, square 12mo.

That after an attentive and vigilant perusal of the said work, your Dedicator is humbly of opinion that so many libels upon your honourable sex were never contained in any previously published work, in 12mo. or any other mo.

That in the title page and preface to the said work, your honourable sex are described and classified as animals; and although your Dedicator is not at present prepared to deny that you *are* animals, still he humbly submits that it is not polite to call you so.

That in the aforesaid preface your honourable sex are also described as Troglodites, which, being a hard word, may, for aught your honourable sex or your Dedicator can say to the contrary, be an injurious and disrespectful appellation.

That the author of the said work applied himself to his task in malice prepense and with wickedness aforethought; a fact which, your Dedicator contends, is sufficiently demonstrated, by his assuming the name of Quiz, which, your Dedicator submits, denotes a foregone conclusion, and implies an intention of quizzing.

That in the execution of his evil design, the said Quiz, or author of the said work, must have betrayed some trust or confidence reposed in him by some members of your honourable sex, otherwise he never could have acquired so much information relative to the manners and customs of your honourable sex in general.

That actuated by these considerations, and further moved by various slanders and insinuations respecting your honourable sex contained in the said work, square 12mo., entitled "Sketches of Young Ladies," your Dedicator ventures to produce another work, square 12mo., entitled "Sketches of Young Gentlemen," of which he now solicits your acceptance and approval.

That as the Young Ladies are the best companions of the Young Gentlemen, so the Young Gentlemen should be the best companions of the Young Ladies; and extending the comparison from animals (to quote the disrespectful language of the said Quiz) to inanimate objects, your Dedicator humbly suggests that such of your honourable sex as purchased the bane should possess themselves of the antidote, and that those of your honourable sex who were not rash enough to take the first, should lose no time in swallowing the last; prevention being in all cases better than cure, as we are informed upon the authority, not only of general acknowledgment, but also of traditionary wisdom.

That with reference to the said bane and antidote, your Dedicator has no further remarks to make than are comprised in the directions issued with Doctor Morison's pills; namely, that whenever your honourable sex take twenty-five of Number 1, you will be pleased to take fifty of Number 2, without delay.

And your Dedicator shall ever pray, &c.

SKETCHES OF YOUNG GENTLEMEN.

THE BASHFUL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

We found ourself seated, at a small dinner party the other day, opposite a stranger of such singular appearance and manner, that he irresistibly attracted our attention.

This was a fresh-coloured young gentleman, with as good a promise of light whisker as one might wish to see, and possessed of a very velvet-like soft-looking countenance. We do not use the latter term invidiously, but merely to denote a pair of smooth, plump, highly-coloured cheeks of capacious dimensions, and a mouth rather remarkable for the fresh hue of the lips, than for any marked or striking expression it presented. His whole face was suffused with a crimson blush, and bore that downcast, timid, retiring look, which betokens a man ill at ease with himself.

There was nothing in these symptoms to attract more than a passing remark; but our attention had been originally drawn to the bashful young gentleman, on his first appearance in the drawing-room above stairs, into which he was no sooner introduced than, making his way towards us, who were standing in a window, and wholly neglecting several persons who warmly accosted him, he seized our hand with visible emotion, and pressed it with a convulsive grasp for a good couple of minutes, after which he dived in a nervous manner across the room, oversetting in his way a fine little girl of six years and a quarter old, and, shrouding himself behind some hangings, was seen no more, until the eagle eye of the hostess detecting him in his concealment, on the announcement of dinner he was requested to pair off with a lively single lady of two or three and thirty.

This most flattering salutation from a perfect stranger would have gratified us not a little as a token of his having held us in high respect, and for that reason been desirous of our acquaintance, if we had not suspected from the first that the young gentleman, in making a desperate effort to get through the ceremony of introduction, had, in the bewilderment of his ideas, shaken hands with us at random. This impression was fully confirmed by the subsequent behaviour of the bashful young gentleman in question, which we noted particularly, with the view of ascertaining whether we were right in our conjecture.

The young gentleman seated himself at table with evident misgivings, and turning sharp round to pay attention to some observation of his loquacious neighbour, overset his bread. There was nothing very bad in this, and if he had had the presence of mind to let it go, and say nothing about it, nobody but the man who had laid the cloth would have been a bit the wiser; but the young gentleman, in various semi-successful attempts to prevent its fall, played with it a little, as gentlemen in the streets may be seen to do with their hats on a windy day, and then giving the roll a smart rap in his anxiety to catch it, knocked it with great adroitness into a tureen full of white soup at some distance, to the unspeakable terror and disturbance of a very amiable bald gentleman, who was dispensing the contents. We thought the bashful young gentleman would have gone off in an apoplectic fit, consequent upon the violent rush of blood to his face at the occurrence of this catastrophe.

From this moment we perceived, in the phraseology of the fancy, that it was "all up" with the bashful young gentleman, and so indeed it was. Several benevolent persons endeavoured to relieve his embarrassment by taking wine with him; but finding that it only augmented his sufferings, and that after mingling sherry, champagne, hock, and moselle together, he applied the greater part of the mixture externally, instead of internally, they gradually dropped off, and left him to the exclusive care of the talkative lady, who, not noting the wildness of his eye, firmly believed she had secured a listener. He broke a glass or two in the course of the meal, and disappeared shortly afterwards: it was inferred that he went away in some confusion, inasmuch as he left the house in another gentleman's coat, and the footman's hat.

This little incident led us to reflect upon the most prominent characteristics of bashful young gentlemen in the abstract; and as this portable volume will be the great text-book of young ladies in all future generations, we record them here for their guidance and behoof.

If the bashful young gentleman, in turning a street corner, chance to stumble suddenly upon two or three young ladies of his acquaintance, nothing can exceed his confusion and agitation. His first impulse is to make a great variety of bows, and dart past them,

which he does until, observing that they wish to stop, but are uncertain whether to do so or not, he makes several feints of returning, which causes them to do the same; and at length, after a great quantity of unnecessary dodging and falling up against the other passengers, he returns and shakes hands most affectionately with all of them, in doing which he knocks out of their grasp sundry little parcels, which he hastily picks up, and returns very muddy and disordered. The chances are that the bashful young gentleman then observes it is very fine weather, and being reminded that it has only just left off raining for the first time these three days, he blushes very much, and smiles as if he had said a very good thing. The young lady who was most anxious to speak, here inquires, with an air of great commiseration, how his dear sister Harriet is to-day; to which the young gentleman, without the slightest consideration, replies with many thanks, that she is remarkably well. "Well, Mr. Hopkins!" cries the young lady, "why, we heard she was bled yesterday evening, and have been perfectly miserable about her." "Oh, ah," says the young gentleman, "so she was. Oh, she 's very ill, very ill indeed." The young gentleman then shakes his head, and looks very desponding (he has been smiling perpetually up to this time), and after a short pause, gives his glove a great wrench at the wrist, and says, with a strong emphasis on the adjective, "*Good* morning, *good* morning." And making a great number of bows in acknowledgment of several little messages to his sister, walks backward a few paces, and comes with great violence against a lamp-post, knocking his hat off in the contact, which in his mental confusion and bodily pain he is going to walk away without. until a great roar from a carter attracts his attention, when he picks it up, and tries to smile cheerfully to the young ladies, who are looking back, and who, he has the satisfaction of seeing, are all laughing heartily.

At a quadrille party, the bashful young gentleman always remains as near the entrance of the room as possible, from which position he smiles at the people he knows as they come in, and sometimes steps forward to shake hands with more intimate friends; a process which on each repetition seems to turn him a deeper scarlet than before. He declines dancing the first set or two, observing, in a faint voice, that he would rather wait a little; but at length is absolutely compelled to allow himself to be introduced to a partner, when he is led, in a great heat and blushing furiously across the room to a spot where half a dozen unknown ladies are congregated together.

"Miss Lambert, let me introduce Mr. Hopkins for the next quadrille." Miss Lambert inclines her head graciously. Mr. Hopkins bows, and his fair conductress disappears, leaving Mr. Hopkins, as he too well knows, to make himself agreeable. The young lady more than half expects that the bashful young gentleman will say something, and the bashful young gentleman feeling this, seriously thinks whether he has got anything to say, which, upon mature reflection, he is rather disposed to conclude he has not, since nothing occurs to him. Meanwhile, the young lady, after several inspections of her bouquet, all made in the expectation that the bashful young gentleman is going to talk, whispers to her mamma who is sitting next her, which whisper the bashful young gentleman immediately suspects (and possibly with very good reason) must be about *him*. In this comfortable condition he remains until it is time to "stand up," when murmuring a "Will you allow me?" he gives the young lady his arm, and after inquiring where she will stand, and receiving a reply that she has no choice, conducts her to the remotest corner of the quadrille, and making one attempt at conversation, which turns out a desperate failure, preserves a profound silence until it is all over, when he walks her twice round the room, deposits her in her old seat, and retires in confusion.

A married bashful gentleman—for these bashful gentlemen *do* get married sometimes; how it is ever brought about is a mystery to us—a married bashful gentleman either causes his wife to appear bold by contrast, or merges her proper importance in his own insignificance. Bashful young gentlemen should be cured, or avoided. They are never hopeless, and never will be while female beauty and attractions retain their influence, as any young lady will find who may think it worth while on this confident assurance to take a patient in hand.

THE OUT-AND-OUT YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

OUT-AND-OUT young gentlemen may be divided into two classes—those who have something to do, and those who have nothing. I shall commence with the former, because that species come more frequently under the notice of young ladies, whom it is our province to warn and to instruct.

The out-and-out young gentleman is usually no great dresser, his instructions to his tailor being all comprehended in the one general direction to "make that what's-a-name a regular bang-up sort of thing." For some years past, the favourite costume of the out-and-out young gentleman has been a rough pilot coat, with two gilt hooks and eyes to the velvet collar; buttons somewhat larger than crown-pieces; a black or fancy neckerchief, loosely tied; a wide-brimmed hat, with a low crown; tightish inexpressibles, and iron-shod boots. Out of doors he sometimes carries a large ash stick, but only on special occasions, for he prefers keeping his hands in his coat-pockets. He smokes at all hours, of course, and swears considerably.

The out-and-out young gentleman is employed in a city counting-house or solicitor's office, in which he does as little as he possibly can: his chief places of resort are the streets, the taverns, and the theatres. In the streets at evening time out-and-out young gentlemen have a pleasant custom of walking six or eight abreast, thus driving females and other inoffensive persons into the road, which never fails to afford them the highest satisfaction, especially if there be any immediate danger of their being run over, which enhances the fun of the thing materially. In all places of public resort the out-and-outers are careful to select each a seat to himself, upon which he lies at full length, and (if the weather be very dirty, but not in any other case), he lies with his knees up and the soles of his boots planted firmly on the cushion, so that if any low fellow should ask him to make room for a lady, he takes ample revenge upon her dress, without going at all out of his way to do it. He always sits with his hat on, and flourishes his stick in the air while the play is proceeding, with a dignified contempt of the performance. If it be possible for one or two out-and-out young gentlemen to get up a little crowding in the passages, they are quite in their element, squeezing, pushing, whooping, and shouting in the most humorous manner possible. If they can only succeed in irritating the gentleman who has a family of daughters under his charge they are like to die with laughing, and boast of it among their companions for a week afterwards, adding that one or two of them were "dev'lish fine girls," and that they really thought the youngest would have fainted, which was the only thing wanted to render the joke complete.

If the out-and-out young gentleman have a mother and sisters, of course he treats them with becoming contempt, inasmuch as they (poor things!) having no notion of life or gaiety, are far too weak-spirited and moping for him. Sometimes, however, on a birthday or at Christmas-time, he cannot very well help accompanying them to a party at some old friend's, with which view he comes home when they have been dressed an hour or two, smelling very strongly of tobacco and spirits, and, after exchanging his rough coat for some more suitable attire (in which, however, he loses nothing of the out-and-outer), gets into the coach, and grumbles all the way at his own good-nature: his bitter reflections aggravated by the recollection that Tom Smith has taken the chair at a little impromptu dinner at a fighting man's, and that a set-to was to take place on a dining-table between the fighting man and his brother-in-law, which is probably "coming off" at that very instant.

As the out-and-out young gentleman is by no means at his ease in ladies' society, he shrinks into a corner of the drawing-room when they reach the friend's, and, unless one of his sisters is kind enough to talk to him, remains there without being much troubled by the attentions of other people, until he espies, lingering outside the door, another gentleman, whom he at once knows, by his air and manner (for there is a kind of freemasonry in the craft), to be a brother out-and-outer, and towards whom he accordingly makes his way. Conversation being soon opened by some casual remark, the second out-and-outer confidentially informs the first that he is one of the rough sort and hates that kind of thing, only he couldn't very well be off coming, to which the other replies that that's just his case. "And I 'll tell you what," continues the out-and-outer in a whisper, "I should like a glass of warm brandy and water just now." "Or a pint of stout and a pipe," suggests the other out-and-outer.

The discovery is at once made that they are sympathetic souls; each of them says at the same moment that he sees the other understands what's what; and they become fast friends at once, more especially when it appears that the second out-and-outer is no other than a gentleman long favourably known to his familiars as "Mr. Warmint Blake," who, upon divers occasions, has distinguished himself in a manner that would not have disgraced the fighting man, and who, having been a

pretty long time about town, had the honour of once shaking hands with the celebrated Mr. Thurtell himself.

At supper these gentlemen greatly distinguish themselves, brightening up very much when the ladies leave the table, and proclaiming aloud their intention of beginning to spend the evening—a process which is generally understood to be satisfactorily performed when a great deal of wine is drunk and a great deal of noise made, both of which feats the out-and-out young gentlemen execute to perfection. Having protracted their sitting until long after the host and the other guests have adjourned to the drawing-room, and finding that they have drained the decanters empty, they follow them thither with complexions rather heightened, and faces rather bloated with wine; and the agitated lady of the house whispers her friends as they waltz together, to the great terror of the whole room, that "both Mr. Blake and Mr. Dummins are very nice sort of young men in their way, only they are eccentric persons, and, unfortunately, *rather too wild.*"

The remaining class of out-and-out young gentlemen is composed of persons, who, having no money of their own and a soul above earning any, enjoy similar pleasures, nobody knows how. These respectable gentlemen, without aiming quite so much at the out-and-out in external appearance, are distinguished by all the same amiable and attractive characteristics, in an equal or perhaps greater degree, and now and then find their way into society through the medium of the other class of out-and-out young gentlemen, who will sometimes carry them home, and who usually pay their tavern bills. As they are equally gentlemanly, clever, witty, intelligent, wise, and well-bred, we need scarcely have recommended them to the peculiar consideration of the young ladies, if it were not that some of the gentle creatures whom we hold in such high respect are perhaps a little too apt to confound a great many heavier terms with the light word eccentricity, which we beg them henceforth to take in a strictly Johnsonian sense, without any liberality or latitude of construction.

THE VERY FRIENDLY YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

WE know—and all people know—so many specimens of this class, that in selecting the few heads our limits enable us to take from a great number, we have been induced to give the very friendly young gentleman the preference over many others, to whose claims upon a more cursory view of the question we had felt disposed to assign the priority.

The very friendly young gentleman is very friendly to everybody, but he attaches himself particularly to two, or at most to three, families; regulating his choice by their dinners, their circle of acquaintance, or some other criterion in which he has an immediate interest. He is of any age between twenty and forty, unmarried of course, must be fond of children, and is expected to make himself generally useful if possible. Let us illustrate our meaning by an example, which is the shortest mode and the clearest.

We encountered one day, by chance, an old friend of whom we had lost sight for some years, and who—expressing a strong anxiety to renew our former intimacy—urged us to dine with him on an early day, that we might talk over old times. We readily assented, adding that we hoped we should be alone. "Oh, certainly, certainly!" said our friend, "not a soul with us but Mincin." "And who is Mincin?" was our natural inquiry. "Oh, don't mind him," replied our friend, "he's a most particular friend of mine, and a very friendly fellow you will find him;" And so he left us.

We thought no more about Mincin until we duly presented ourselves at the house next day, when, after a hearty welcome, our friend motioned towards a gentleman who had been previously showing his teeth by the fireplace, and gave us to understand that it was Mr. Mincin, of whom he had spoken. It required no great penetration on our part to discover at once that Mincin was in every respect a very friendly young gentleman.

"I am delighted," said Mincin, hastily advancing, and pressing our hand warmly between both of his, "I am delighted, I am sure, to make your acquaintance"—(here he smiled)—"very much delighted indeed"—(here he exhibited a little emotion)—"I assure you that I have looked forward to it anxiously for a long time." Here he released our hands, and rubbing his own, observed that the day was severe, but that he was delighted to perceive from our appearance that it agreed with us wonderfully; and then went

on to observe that, notwithstanding the coldness of the weather, he had that morning seen in the paper an exceedingly curious paragraph, to the effect that there was now in the garden of Mr. Wilkins, of Chichester, a pumpkin measuring four feet in height, and eleven feet seven inches in circumference, which he looked upon as a very extraordinary piece of intelligence. We ventured to remark that we had a dim recollection of having once or twice before observed a similar paragraph in the public prints, upon which Mr. Mincin took us confidentially by the button, and said, Exactly, exactly, to be sure, we were very right; and he wondered what the editors meant by putting in such things. Who the deuce, he should like to know, did they suppose cared about them?—that struck him as being the best of it.

The lady of the house appeared shortly afterwards, and Mr. Mincin's friendliness, as will be readily supposed, suffered no diminution in consequence. He exerted much strength and skill in wheeling a large easy-chair up to the fire, and the lady being seated in it, carefully closed the door, stirred the fire, and looked to the windows to see that they admitted no air; having satisfied himself upon all these points, he expressed himself quite easy in his mind, and begged to know how she found herself to-day. Upon the lady's replying very well, Mr. Mincin (who it appeared was a medical gentleman) offered some general remarks upon the nature and treatment of colds in the head, which occupied us agreeably until dinner-time. During the meal he devoted himself to complimenting everybody, not forgetting himself, so that we were an uncommonly agreeable quartette.

"I'll tell you what, Capper," said Mr. Mincin to our host, as he closed the door after the lady had retired, "you have very great reason to be fond of your wife. Sweet woman, Mrs. Capper, sir!" "Nay, Mincin—I beg," interposed the host, as we were about to reply that Mrs. Capper unquestionably was particularly sweet. "Pray, Mincin, don't." Why not?" exclaimed Mr. Mincin, "why not? Why should you feel any delicacy before your old friend—*our* old friend, if I may be allowed to call you so, sir; why should you, I ask?" We of course wished to know why he should also, upon which our friend admitted that Mrs. Capper *was* a very sweet woman, at which admission Mr. Mincin cried "Bravo!" and begged to propose Mrs. Capper with heartfelt enthusiasm, whereupon our host said, "Thank you, Mincin," with deep feeling, and gave us, in a low voice, to understand that Mincin had saved Mrs. Capper's cousin's life no less than fourteen times in a year and a half, which he considered no common circumstance—an opinion to which we most cordially subscribed.

Now that we three were left to entertain ourselves with conversation, Mr. Mincin's extreme friendliness became every moment more apparent; he was so amazingly friendly, indeed, that it was impossible to talk about anything in which he had not the chief concern. We happened to allude to some affairs in which our friend and we had been mutually engaged nearly fourteen years before, when Mr. Mincin was all at once reminded of a joke which our friend had made on that day four years, which he positively must insist upon telling—and which he did tell accordingly, with many pleasant recollections of what he said, and what Mrs. Capper said, and how he well remembered that they had been to the play with orders on the very night previous, and had seen "Romeo and Juliet," and the pantomime, and how Mrs. Capper being faint had been led into the lobby, where she smiled, said it was nothing after all, and went back again, with many other interesting and absorbing particulars. After which, the friendly young gentleman went on to assure us, that our friend had experienced a marvellously prophetic opinion of that same pantomime, which was of such an admirable kind, that two morning papers took the same view next day; to this our friend replied, with a little triumph, that in that instance he had some reason to think he had been correct, which gave the friendly young gentleman occasion to believe that our friend was always correct. And so we went on, until our friend, filling a bumper, said he must drink one glass to his dear friend Mincin, than whom he would say no man saved the lives of his acquaintances more, or had a more friendly heart. Finally, our friend having emptied his glass, said, "God bless you, Mincin," and Mr. Mincin and he shook hands across the table with much affection and earnestness.

But great as the friendly young gentleman is in a limited scene like this, he plays the same part on a larger scale with increased *eclat*. Mr. Mincin is invited to an evening party with his dear friends the Martins, where he meets his dear friends the Cappers, and his dear friends the Watsons, and a hundred other dear friends too numerous to mention. He is as much at home with the Martins as with the Cappers; but how exquisitely he balances his attentions, and divides them among his dear friends! If he flirts with one of the Miss Watsons, he has one little Martin on the sofa pulling his hair, and the other little Martin on the carpet riding on his foot. He carries Mrs. Watson down to supper on one arm, and Miss Martin on the other, and takes wine so judiciously and in such exact order, that it is impossible for the most punctilious old lady to consider herself neglected. If any young lady, being prevailed upon to sing, become nervous afterwards, Mr. Mincin leads her tenderly into the

next room, and restores her with port wine, which she must take medicinally. If any gentleman be standing by the piano during the progress of the ballad, Mr. Mincin seizes him by the arm at one point of the melody, and softly beating time the while with his head, expresses in dumb show his intense perception of the delicacy of the passage. If anybody's self-love is to be flattered, Mr. Mincin is at hand. If anybody's overweening vanity is to be pampered, Mr. Mincin will surfeit it.

What wonder that people of all stations and ages recognize Mr. Mincin's friendliness; that he is universally allowed to be handsome as amiable; that mothers think him an oracle, daughters a dear, brothers a beau, and fathers a wonder? And who would not have the reputation of the very friendly young gentleman?

THE MILITARY YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

We are rather at a loss to imagine how it has come to pass that military young gentlemen have obtained so much favour in the eyes of the young ladies of this kingdom. We cannot think so lightly of them as to suppose that the mere circumstance of a man's wearing a red coat ensures him a ready passport to their regard; and even if this were the case, it would be no satisfactory explanation of the circumstance, because, although the analogy may in some degree hold good in the case of mail coachmen and guards, still, general postmen wear red coats, and *they* are not to our knowledge better received than other men; nor are firemen either, who wear (or used to wear) not only red coats, but very resplendent and massive badges besides—much larger than epaulettes. Neither do the twopenny post-office boys, if the result of our inquiries be correct, find any peculiar favour in woman's eyes, although they wear very bright red jackets, and have the additional advantage of constantly appearing in public on horseback, which last circumstance may be naturally supposed to be greatly in their favour.

We have sometimes thought that this phenomenon may take its rise in the conventional behaviour of captains and colonels and other gentlemen in red coats on the stage, where they are invariably represented as fine swaggering fellows, talking of nothing but charming girls, their king and country, their honour, and their debts, and crowing over the inferior classes of the community, whom they occasionally treat with a little gentlemanly swindling, no less to the improvement and pleasure of the audience, than to the satisfaction and approval of the choice spirits who consort with them. But we will not devote these pages to our speculations upon the subject, inasmuch as our business at the present moment is not so much with the young ladies who are bewitched by her Majesty's livery, as with the young gentlemen whose heads are turned by it. For "heads" we had written "brains;" but, upon consideration, we think the former the more appropriate word of the two.

These young gentlemen may be divided into two classes—young gentlemen who are actually in the army, and young gentlemen who, having an intense and enthusiastic admiration for all things appertaining to a military life, are compelled by adverse fortune or adverse relations to wear out their existence in some ignoble counting-house. We will take this latter description of military young gentlemen first.

The whole heart and soul of the military young gentleman are concentrated in his favourite topic. There is nothing that he is so learned upon as uniforms; he will tell you, without faltering for an instant, what the habiliments of any one regiment are turned up with, what regiment wear stripes down the outside and inside of the leg, and how many buttons the Tenth had on their coats; he knows to a fraction how many yards and odd inches of gold lace it takes to make an ensign in the Guards; is deeply read in the comparative merits of different bands, and the apparelling of trumpeters; and is very luminous indeed in descanting upon "crack regiments," and the "crack" gentlemen who compose them, of whose mightiness and grandeur he is never tired of telling.

We were suggesting to a military young gentleman only the other day, after he had related to us several dazzling instances of the profusion of half a dozen honourable ensign somebodies or nobodies in the articles of kid gloves and polished boots, that possibly "cracked" regiments would be an improvement upon "crack," as being a more expressive and appropriate designation, when he suddenly interrupted us by pulling out his watch, and observing that he must hurry off to the park in a cab, or he would be too late to hear the band play. Not wishing to inter-

fere with so important an engagement, and being in fact already slightly overwhelmed by the anecdotes of the honourable ensigns aforementioned, we made no attempt to detain the military young gentleman, but parted company with ready good-will.

Some three or four hours afterwards, we chanced to be walking down Whitehall, on the Admiralty side of the way, when, as we drew near to one of the little stone places in which a couple of horse soldiers mount guard in the daytime, we were attracted by the motionless appearance and eager gaze of a young gentleman, who was devouring both man and horse with his eyes so eagerly, that he seemed deaf and blind to all that was passing around him. We were not much surprised at the discovery that it was our friend the military young gentleman, but we *were* a little astonished when we returned from a walk to South Lambeth to find him still there, looking on with the same intensity as before. As it was a very windy day, we felt bound to awaken the young gentleman from his reverie, when he inquired of us with great enthusiasm, whether "that was not a glorious spectacle," and proceeded to give us a detailed account of the weight of every article of the spectacle's trappings, from the man's gloves to the horse's shoes.

We have made it a practice since to take the Horse Guards in our daily walk, and we find it is the custom of military young gentlemen to plant themselves opposite the sentries, and contemplate them at leisure, in periods varying from fifteen minutes to fifty, and averaging twenty-five. We were much struck a day or two since by the behaviour of a very promising young butcher, who (evincing an interest in the service, which cannot be too strongly commended or encouraged), after a prolonged inspection of the sentry, proceeded to handle his boots with great curiosity, and as much composure and indifference as if the man were waxwork.

But the really military young gentleman is waiting all this time, and at the very moment that an apology rises to our lips, he emerges from the barrack gate (he is quartered in a garrison town), and takes the way towards the high street. He wears his undress uniform, which somewhat mars the glory of his outward man; but still how great, how grand he is! What a happy mixture of ease and ferocity in his gait and carriage, and how lightly he carries that dreadful sword under his arm, making no more ado about it than if it were a silk umbrella! The lion is sleeping: only think if an enemy were in sight, how soon he'd whip it out of the scabbard, and what a terrible fellow he would be!

But he walks on, thinking of nothing less than blood and slaughter; and now he comes in sight of three other military young gentlemen, arm-in-arm, who are bearing down towards him, clanking their iron heels on the pavement, and clashing their swords with a noise which should cause all peaceful men to quail at heart. They stop to talk. See how the flaxen-haired young gentleman with the weak legs—he who has his pocket-handkerchief thrust into the breast of his coat—glares upon the faint-hearted civilians who linger to look upon his glory; how the next young gentleman elevates his head in the air, and majestically places his arms a-kimbo, while the third stands with his legs very wide apart, and clasps his hands behind him. Well may we inquire—not in familiar jest, but in respectful earnest—if you call that nothing. Oh! if some encroaching foreign power—the Emperor of Russia, for instance, or any of those deep fellows—could only see those military young gentlemen as they move on together towards the billiard-room over the way, wouldn't he tremble a little?

And then, at the theatre at night, when the performances are by command of Colonel Fitz-Sordust and the officers of the garrison, what a splendid sight it is! How sternly the defenders of their country look round the house as if in mute assurance to the audience that they may make themselves comfortable regarding any foreign invasion, for they (the military young gentlemen) are keeping a sharp look-out, and are ready for anything. And what a contrast between them and that stage-box full of grey-headed officers with tokens of many battles about them, who have nothing at all in common with the military young gentlemen, and who, but for an old-fashioned kind of manly dignity in their looks and bearing, might be common hard-working soldiers for anything they take the pains to announce to the contrary!

Ah! here is a family just come in who recognize the flaxen-headed young gentleman; and the flaxen-headed young gentleman recognizes them too, only he doesn't care to show it just now. Very well done indeed! He talks louder to the little group of military young gentlemen who are standing by him, and coughs to induce some ladies in the next box but one to look round, in order that their faces may undergo the same ordeal of criticism to which they have subjected, in not a wholly inaudible tone, the majority of the female portion of the audience. Oh! a gentleman in the same box looks round as if he were disposed to resent this as an impertinence; and the flaxen-headed young gentleman sees his friends at once, and hurries away to them with the most charming cordiality.

Three young ladies, one young man, and the mamma of the party, receive the military young gentleman with great warmth and politeness, and in five minutes afterwards the military young gentleman, stimulated by the mamma, introduces the two other military young gentlemen with whom he was walking

in the morning, who take their seats behind the young ladies and commence conversation; whereat the mamma bestows a triumphant bow upon a rival mamma, who has not succeeded in decoying any military young gentleman, and prepares to consider her visitors from that moment three of the most elegant and superior young gentlemen in the whole world.

THE POLITICAL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

ONCE upon a time—*not* in the days when pigs drank wine, but in a more recent period of our history—it was customary to banish politics when ladies were present. If this usage still prevailed, we should have had no chapter for political young gentlemen, for ladies would have neither known nor cared what kind of monster a political young gentleman was. But as this good custom, in common with many others, has "gone out," and left no word when it is likely to be home again; as political young ladies are by no means rare, and political young gentlemen the very reverse of scarce; we are bound in the strict discharge of our most responsible duty not to neglect this natural division of our subject.

If the political young gentleman be resident in a country town (and there *are* political young gentlemen in country towns sometimes), he is wholly absorbed in his politics: as a pair of purple spectacles communicate the same uniform tint to all objects near and remote, so the political glasses, with which the young gentleman assists his mental vision, give to everything the hue and tinge of party feeling. The political young gentleman would as soon think of being struck with the beauty of a young lady in the opposite interest, as he would dream of marrying his sister to the opposite Member.

If the political young gentleman be a Conservative, he has usually some vague ideas about Ireland and the Pope which he cannot very clearly explain, but which he knows are the right sort of thing, and not to be very easily got over by the other side. He has also some choice sentences regarding Church and State, culled from the banners in use at the last election, with which he intersperses his conversation at intervals with surprising effect. But his great topic is the Constitution, upon which he will declaim, by the hour together, with much heat and fury; not that he has any particular information on the subject, but because he knows that the Constitution is somehow Church and State, and Church and State somehow the Constitution, and that the fellows on the other side say it isn't, which is quite a sufficient reason for him to say it is, and to stick to it.

Perhaps his greatest topic of all, though, is the People. If a fight takes place in a populous town, in which many noses are broken, and a few windows, the young gentleman throws down the newspaper with a triumphant air, and exclaims, "Here's your precious people!" if half a dozen boys run across the course at race-time, when it ought to be kept clear, the young gentleman looks indignantly round, and begs you to observe the conduct of the people; if the gallery demand a hornpipe between the play and the afterpiece, the same young gentleman cries "No!" and "Shame!" till he is hoarse, and then inquires with a sneer what you think of popular moderation *now;* in short, the people form a never-failing theme for him; and when the attorney, on the side of his candidate, dwells upon it with great power of eloquence at election-time, as he never fails to do, the young gentleman and his friends, and the body they head, cheer with great violence against *the other people*, with whom, of course, they have no possible connexion. In much the same manner the audience at a theatre never fail to be highly amused with any jokes at the expense of the public—always laughing heartily at some other public, and never at themselves.

If the political young gentleman be a Radical, he is usually a very profound person indeed, having great store of theoretical questions to put to you, with an infinite variety of possible cases and logical deductions therefrom. If he be of the utilitarian school, too, which is more than probable, he is particularly pleasant company, having many ingenious remarks to offer upon the Voluntary Principle, and various cheerful disquisitions connected with the population of the country, the position of Great Britain in the scale of nations, and the Balance of Power. Then he is exceedingly well versed in all doctrines of political economy as laid down in the newspapers, and knows a great many Parliamentary speeches by heart; nay, he has a small stock of aphorisms, none of them exceeding a couple of lines in length, which will settle the toughest question and leave you nothing to say. He gives all the young ladies to understand that Miss Martineau is the greatest woman that ever lived, and, when

they praise the good looks of Mr. Hawkins the new Member, says he's very well for a representative, all things considered, but he wants a little calling to account, and he is more than half afraid it will be necessary to bring him down on his knees for that vote on the Miscellaneous Estimates. At this the young ladies express much wonderment, and say surely a Member of Parliament is not to be brought upon his knees so easily; in reply to which the political young gentleman smiles sternly, and throws out dark hints regarding the speedy arrival of that day when Members of Parliament will be paid salaries and required to render weekly accounts of their proceedings, at which the young ladies utter many expressions of astonishment and incredulity, while their lady mothers regard the prophecy as little else than blasphemous.

It is extremely improving and interesting to hear two political young gentlemen, of diverse opinions, discuss some great question across a dinner-table; such as whether, if the public were admitted to Westminster Abbey for nothing, they would or would not convey small chisels and hammers in their pockets, and immediately set about chipping all the noses off the statues; or whether, if they once got into the Tower for a shilling, they would not insist upon trying the crown on their own heads, and loading and firing off all the small arms in the armoury, to the great discomposure of Whitechapel and the Minories. Upon these and many other momentous questions which agitate the public mind in these desperate days, they will discourse with great vehemence and irritation for a considerable time together, both leaving off precisely where they began, and each thoroughly persuaded that he has got the better of the other.

In society, at assemblies, balls, and playhouses, these political young gentlemen are perpetually on the watch for a political allusion, or anything which can be tortured or construed into being one; when, thrusting themselves into the very smallest openings for their favourite discourse, they fall upon the unhappy company tooth and nail. They have recently had many favourable opportunities of opening in churches, but as there the clergyman has it all his own way and must not be contradicted, whatever politics he preaches, they are fain to hold their tongues until they reach the outer door, though at the imminent risk of bursting in the effort.

As such discussions can please nobody but the talkative parties concerned, we hope they will henceforth take the hint and discontinue them, otherwise we now give them warning that the ladies have our advice to discountenance such talkers altogether.

THE DOMESTIC YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

LET us make a slight sketch of our amiable friend, Mr. Felix Nixon. We are strongly disposed to think, that if we put him in this place, he will answer our purpose without another word of comment.

Felix, then, is a young gentleman who lives at home with his mother, just within the twopenny-post office circle of three miles from St. Martin's le Grand. He wears India-rubber goloshes when the weather is at all damp, and always has a silk handkerchief neatly folded up in the right-hand pocket of his great-coat to tie over his mouth when he goes home at night; moreover, being rather near-sighted, he carries spectacles for particular occasions, and has a weakish tremulous voice of which he makes great use, for he talks as much as any old lady breathing.

The two chief subjects of Felix's discourse are himself and his mother, both of whom would appear to be very wonderful and interesting persons. As Felix and his mother are seldom apart in body, so Felix and his mother are scarcely ever separate in spirit. If you ask Felix how he finds himself to-day, he prefaces his reply with a long and minute bulletin of his mother's state of health; and the good lady in her turn edifies her acquaintance with a circumstantial and alarming account, how he sneezed four times and coughed once after being out in the rain the other night, but having his feet promptly put into hot water, and his head into a flannel something, which we will not describe more particularly than by this delicate allusion, was happily brought round by the next morning, and enabled to go to business as usual.

Our friend is not a very adventurous or hot-headed person, but he has passed through many dangers, as his mother can testify: there is one great story in particular, concerning a hackney coachman who wanted to overcharge him one night for bringing them home from the play, upon which Felix gave the aforesaid

coachman a look which his mother thought would have crushed him to the earth, but which did not crush him quite, for he continued to demand another sixpence, notwithstanding that Felix took out his pocket-book, and, with the aid of a flat candle, pointed out the fare in print, which the coachman obstinately disregarding, he shut the street door with a slam which his mother shudders to think of; and then, roused to the most appalling pitch of passion by the coachman knocking a double knock to show that he was by no means convinced, he broke with uncontrollable force from his parent and the servant girl, and, running into the street, without his hat, actually shook his fist at the coachman, and came back again with a face as white, Mrs. Nixon says, looking about her for a simile, as white as that ceiling. She never will forget his fury that night, Never!

To this account Felix listens with a solemn face, occasionally looking at you to see how it affects you, and when his mother has made an end of it, adds that he looked at every coachman he met for three weeks afterwards, in hopes that he might see the scoundrel; whereupon Mrs. Nixon, with an exclamation of terror, requests to know what he would have done to him if he *had* seen him, at which Felix smiling darkly and clenching his right fist, she exclaims "Goodness gracious!" with a distracted air, and insists upon extorting a promise that he never will on any account do anything so rash, which her dutiful son—it being something more than three years since the offence was committed—reluctantly concedes; and his mother, shaking her head prophetically, fears with a sigh that his spirit will lead him into something violent yet. The discourse, then, by an easy transition, turns upon the spirit which glows within the bosom of Felix; upon which point Felix himself becomes eloquent, and relates a thrilling anecdote of the time when he used to sit up till two o'clock in the morning reading French, and how his mother used to say, "Felix, you will make yourself ill, I know you will;" and how *he* used to say, "Mother, I don't care—I will do it;" and how at last his mother privately procured a doctor to come and see him, who declared, the moment he felt his pulse, that if he had gone on reading one night more—only one night more—he must have put a blister on each temple, and another between his shoulders; and who, as it was, sat down upon the instant, and writing a prescription for a blue pill, said it must be taken immediately, or he wouldn't answer for the consequences. The recital of these and many other moving perils of the like nature constantly harrows up the feelings of Mr. Nixon's friends.

Mrs. Nixon has a tolerably extensive circle of female acquaintance, being a good-humoured, talkative, bustling little body, and to the unmarried girls among them she is constantly vaunting the virtues of her son, hinting that she will be a very happy person who wins him, but that they must mind their P's and Q's, for he is very particular, and terribly severe upon young ladies. At this last caution the young ladies resident in the same row, who happen to be spending the evening there, put their pocket-handkerchiefs before their mouths, and are troubled with a short cough; just then Felix knocks at the door, and his mother, drawing the tea-table nearer the fire, calls out to him as he takes off his boots in the back parlour that he needn't mind coming in in his slippers, for there are only the two Miss Greys and Miss Thompson, and she is quite sure they will excuse *him*, and nodding to the two Miss Greys, she adds, in a whisper, that Julia Thompson is a great favourite with Felix, at which intelligence the short cough comes again, and Miss Thompson in particular is greatly troubled with it, till Felix coming in, very faint for want of his tea, changes the subject of discourse, and enables her to laugh out boldly and tell Amelia Grey not to be so foolish. Here they all three laugh, and Mrs. Nixon says they are giddy girls; in which stage of the proceedings, Felix, who has by this time refreshened himself with the grateful herb that "cheers but not inebriates," removes his cup from his countenance, and says with a knowing smile that all girls are; whereat his admiring mamma pats him on the back and tells him not to be sly, which calls forth a general laugh from the young ladies, and another smile from Felix, who, thinking he looks very sly indeed, is perfectly satisfied.

Tea being over, the young ladies resume their work, and Felix insists upon holding a skein of silk while Miss Thompson winds it on a card. This process having been performed to the satisfaction of all parties, he brings down his flute in compliance with a request from the youngest Miss Grey, and plays divers tunes out of a very small music-book till supper-time, when he is very facetious and talkative indeed. Finally, after half a tumblerful of warm sherry and water, he gallantly puts on his goloshes over his slippers, and telling Miss Thompson's servant to run on first and get the door open, escorts that young lady to her house, five doors off; the Miss Greys, who live in the next house but one, stopping to peep with merry faces from their own door till he comes back again, when they call out "Very well, Mr. Felix," and trip into the passage with a laugh more musical than any flute that was ever played.

Felix is rather prim in his appearance, and perhaps a little priggish about his books and flute, and so forth, which have all their peculiar corners of peculiar shelves in his bed-room; indeed, all his female acquaintance (and they are good judges) have long ago set him down as a thorough old bachelor. He is a favourite

with them, however, in a certain way, as an honest, inoffensive, kind-hearted creature; and as his peculiarities harm nobody, not even himself, we are induced to hope that many who are not personally acquainted with him will take our good word in his behalf, and be content to leave him to a long continuance of his harmless existence.

THE CENSORIOUS YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

THERE is an amiable kind of young gentleman going about in society upon whom, after much experience of him, and considerable turning over of the subject in our mind, we feel it our duty to affix the above appellation. Young ladies mildly call him a "sarcastic" young gentleman, or a "severe" young gentleman. We, who know better, beg to acquaint them with with the fact that he is merely a censorious young gentleman, and nothing else.

The censorious young gentleman has the reputation among his familiars of a remarkably clever person, which he maintains by receiving all intelligence and expressing all opinions with a dubious sneer, accompanied with half a smile, expressive of anything you please but good humour. This sets people about thinking what on earth the censorious young gentleman means, and they speedily arrive at the conclusion that he means something very deep indeed, for they reason in this way:—"This young gentleman looks so very knowing that he must mean something, and as I am by no means a dull individual, what a very deep meaning he must have if *I* can't find out." It is extraordinary how soon a censorious young gentleman may make a reputation in his own small circle if he bear this in his mind, and regulate his proceedings accordingly.

As young ladies are generally—not curious, but laudably desirous to acquire information, the censorious young gentleman is much talked about among them, and many surmises are hazarded regarding him.

"I wonder," exclaims the eldest Miss Greenwood, laying down her work to turn up the lamp, "I wonder whether Mr. Fairfax will ever be married."

"Bless me, dear!" cries Miss Marshall, "whatever made you think of him?"

"Really I hardly know," replies Miss Greenwood; "he is such a very mysterious person, that I often wonder about him."

"Well, to tell you the truth," replies Miss Marshall, "and so do I."

Here two other young ladies profess that they are constantly doing the like, and all present appear in the same condition except one young lady, who, not scrupling to state that she considers Mr. Fairfax "a horror," draws down all the opposition of the others, which having been expressed in a great many ejaculatory passages, such as "Well, did I ever!" and "Lor, Emily, dear!" ma takes up the subject, and gravely states that she must say she does not think Mr. Fairfax by any means a horror, but rather takes him to be a young man of very great ability; "and I am quite sure," adds the worthy lady, "he always means a great deal more than he says."

The door opens at this point of the discourse, and who of all people alive walks into the room but the very Mr. Fairfax who has been the subject of conversation.

"Well, it really is curious," cries ma: "we were at that very moment talking about you."

"You did me great honour," replies Mr. Fairfax. "May I venture to ask what you were saying?"

"Why, if you must know," returns the eldest girl, "we were remarking what a very mysterious man you are."

"Ay, ay," observes Mr. Fairfax, "Indeed!"

Now Mr. Fairfax says this ay, ay, and indeed, which are slight words enough in themselves, with so very unfathomable an air, and accompanies them with such a very equivocal smile, that ma and the young ladies are more than ever convinced that he means an immensity, and so tell him he is a very dangerous man, and seems to be always thinking ill of somebody, which is precisely the sort of character the censorious young gentleman is most desirous to establish; wherefore he says, "Oh, dear, no," in a tone obviously intended to mean "You have me there," and which gives them to understand that they have hit the right nail on the very centre of its head.

When the conversation ranges from the mystery overhanging the censorious young gentleman's behaviour to the general topics of the day, he sustains his character to admiration. He considers the new tragedy well enough *for* a new tragedy, but Lord bless us—well, no matter; he could say a great deal on that point, but he would rather not, lest he should

be thought ill-natured, as he knows he would be.

"But is not Mr. So and So's performance truly charming?" inquires a young lady.

"Charming!" replies the censorious young gentleman. "Oh, dear, yes, certainly; very charming—oh, very charming indeed."

After this, he stirs the fire, smiling contemptuously all the while; and a modest young gentleman who has been a silent listener, thinks what a great thing it must be to have such a critical judgment. Of music, pictures, books, and poetry, the censorious young gentleman has an equally fine conception. As to men and women, he can tell all about them at a glance.

"Now let us hear your opinion of young Mrs. Barker," says some great believer in the powers of Mrs Fairfax, "but don't be too severe."

"I never am severe," replies the censorious young gentleman.

"Well, never mind that now. She is very ladylike, is she not?"

"Ladylike!" repeats the censorious young gentleman (for he always repeats when he is at a loss for anything to say). "Did you observe her manner? Bless my heart and soul, Mrs. Thompson, did you observe her manner?—that's all I ask."

"I thought I had done so," rejoins the poor lady, much perplexed; "I did not observe it very closely, perhaps."

"Oh, not very closely," rejoins the censorious young gentleman, triumphantly. "Very good; then *I* did. Let us talk no more about her."

"The censorious young gentleman purses up his lips, and nods his head sagely as he says this; and it is forthwith whispered about that Mr. Fairfax (who, though he is a little prejudiced, must be admitted to be a very excellent judge) has observed something exceedingly odd in Mrs. Barker's manner.

THE FUNNY YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

As one funny young gentleman will serve as a sample of all funny young gentlemen, we purpose merely to note down the conduct and behaviour of an individual specimen of this class, whom we happened to meet at an annual family Christmas party in the course of this very last Christmas that ever came.

We were all seated round a blazing fire which crackled pleasantly as the guests talked merrily, and the urn steamed cheerily—for, being an old-fashioned party, there *was* an urn, and a teapot besides—when there came a postman's knock at the door, so violent and sudden that it startled the whole circle, and actually caused two or three very interesting and most unaffected young ladies to scream aloud, and to exhibit many afflicting symptoms of terror and distress, until they had been several times assured by their respective adorers that they were in no danger. We were about to remark that it was surely beyond post-time, and must have been a runaway knock, when our host, who had hitherto been paralysed with wonder, sank into a chair in a perfect ecstacy of laughter, and offered to lay twenty pounds that it was that droll dog Griggins. He had no sooner said this than the majority of the company and all the children of the house burst into a roar of laughter too, as if some inimitable joke flashed upon them simultaneously, and gave vent to various exclamations of—To be sure it must be Griggins, and How like him that was, and What spirits he was always in! with many other commendatory remarks of the like nature.

Not having the happiness to know Griggins, we became extremely desirous to see so pleasant a fellow, the more especially as a stout gentleman with a powdered head, who was sitting with his breeches buckles almost touching the hob, whispered us he was a wit of the first water, when the door opened, and Mr. Griggins being announced, presented himself, amidst another shout of laughter and a loud clapping of hands from the younger branches. This welcome he acknowledged by sundry contortions of countenance, imitative of the clown in one of the new pantomimes, which were so extremely successful, that one stout gentleman rolled upon an ottoman in a paroxysm of delight, protesting, with many gasps, that if somebody didn't make that fellow Griggins leave off, he would be the death of him, he knew. At this the company only laughed more boisterously than before, and as we always like to accommodate our tone and spirit if possible to the humour of any society in which we find ourself, we laughed with the rest, and exclaimed, "Oh! capital, capital!" as loud as any of them.

When he had quite exhausted all beholders, Mr. Griggins received the welcomes and congratulations of the circle, and went through

the needful introductions with much ease and many puns. This ceremony over, he avowed his intention of sitting in somebody's lap unless the young ladies made room for him on the sofa, which being done, after a great deal of tittering and pleasantry, he squeezed himself among them, and likened his condition to that of Love among the roses. At this novel jest we all roared once more.

"You should consider yourself highly honoured, sir," said we.

"Sir," replied Mr. Griggins, "you do me proud."

Here everybody laughed again; and the stout gentleman by the fire whispered in our ear that Griggins was making a dead set at us.

The tea-things having been removed, we all sat down to a round game, and here Mr. Griggins shone forth with peculiar brilliancy, abstracting other people's fish, and looking over their hands in the most comical manner. He made one most excellent joke in snuffing a candle, which was neither more nor less than setting fire to the hair of a pale young gentleman who sat next him, and afterwards begging his pardon with considerable humour. As the young gentleman could not see the joke, however, possibly in consequence of its being on the top of his own head, it did not go off quite as well as it might have done; indeed, the young gentleman was heard to murmur some general references to "impertinence," and a "rascal," and to state the number of his lodgings in an angry tone—a turn of the conversation which might have been productive of slaughterous consequences, if a young lady, betrothed to the young gentleman, had not used her immediate influence to bring about a reconciliation; emphatically declaring in an agitated whisper, intended for his peculiar edification, but audible to the whole table, that if he went on in that way, she never would think of him otherwise than as a friend, though as that she must always regard him. At this terrible threat the young gentleman became calm, and the young lady, overcome by the revulsion of feeling, instantaneously fainted.

Mr. Griggins's spirits were slightly depressed for a short period by this unlooked-for result of such a harmless pleasantry, but being promptly elevated by the attentions of the host and several glasses of wine, he soon recovered, and became even more vivacious than before, insomuch that the stout gentleman previously referred to, assured us that although he had known him since he was *that* high (something smaller than a nutmeg-grater), he had never beheld him in such an excellent cue.

When the round game and several games at blind man's buff which followed it were all over, and we were going down to supper, the inexhaustible Mr. Griggins produced a small sprig of misletoe from his waistcoat pocket, and commenced a general kissing of the assembled females, which occasioned great commotion and much excitement. We observed that several young gentlemen—including the young gentleman with the pale countenance—were greatly scandalized at this indecorous proceeding, and talked very big among themselves in corners; and we observed, too, that several young ladies when remonstrated with by the aforesaid young gentlemen, called each other to witness how they had struggled, and protested vehemently that it was very rude, and that they were surprised at Mrs. Brown's allowing it, and that they couldn't bear it, and had no patience with such impertinence. But such is the gentle and forgiving nature of woman, that although we looked very narrowly for it, we could not detect the slightest harshness in the subsequent treatment of Mr. Griggins. Indeed, upon the whole, it struck us that among the ladies he seemed rather more popular than before!

To recount all the drollery of Mr. Griggins at supper, would fill such a tiny volume as this to the very bottom of the outside cover. How he drank out of other people's glasses, and ate of other people's bread, how he frightened into screaming convulsions a little boy who was sitting up to supper in a high chair, by sinking below the table and suddenly reappearing with a mask on; how the hostess was really surprised that anybody could find a pleasure in tormenting children, and how the host frowned at the hostess, and felt convinced that Mr. Griggins had done it with the very best intentions; how Mr. Griggins explained, and how everybody's good-humour was restored but the child's;—to tell these and a hundred other things ever so briefly, would occupy more of our room and our readers' patience, than either they or we can conveniently spare. Therefore we change the subject, merely observing that we have offered no description of the funny young gentleman's personal appearance, believing that almost every society has a Griggins of its own, and leaving all readers to supply the deficiency, according to the particular circumstances of their particular case.

THE THEATRICAL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

ALL gentlemen who love the drama—and there are few gentlemen who are not attached to the most intellectual and rational of all our amusements—do not come within this definition. As we have no mean relish for theatrical entertainments ourself, we are disinterestedly anxious that this should be perfectly understood.

The theatrical young gentleman has early and important information on all theatrical topics. "Well," says he, abruptly, when you meet him in the street, "here's a pretty to-do! Flimkins has thrown up his part in the melodrama at the Surrey."

"And what's to be done?" you inquire, with as much gravity as you can counterfeit.

"Ah, that's the point," replies the theatrical young gentleman, looking very serious. "Boozle declines it—positively declines it. From all I am told, I should say it was decidedly in Boozle's line, and that he would be very likely to make a great hit in it; but he objects on the ground of Flimkins having been put up in the part first, and says no earthly power shall induce him to take the character. It's a fine part, too—excellent business, I'm told. He has to kill six people in the course of the piece, and to fight over a bridge in red fire, which is as safe a card, you know, as can be. Don't mention it; but I hear that the last scene, when he is first poisoned, and then stabbed, by Mrs. Flimkins as Vengedora, will be the greatest thing that has been done these many years." With this piece of news, and laying his finger on his lips as a caution for you not to excite the town with it, the theatrical young gentleman hurries away.

The theatrical young gentleman, from often frequenting the different theatrical establishments, has pet and familiar names for them all. Thus Covent Garden is the Garden, Drury Lane the Lane, the Victoria the Vic, and the Olympic the Pic. Actresses, too, are always designated by their surnames only, as Taylor, Nisbett, Faucit, Honey—that talented and ladylike girl Sheriff, that clever little creature Horton, and so on. In the same manner he prefixes Christian names when he mentions the actors, as Charley Young, Jemmy Buckstone, Fred Yates, Paul Bedford. When he is at a loss for a Christian name, the word "old" applied discriminately answers quite as well—as old Charley Mathews at Vestris's, old Harley, and old Braham. He has a great knowledge of the private proceedings of actresses, especially of their getting married, and can tell you in a breath half a dozen who have changed their names without avowing it. Whenever an alteration of this kind is made in the playbills, he will remind you that he let you into the secret six months ago.

The theatrical young gentleman has a great reverence for all that is connected with the stage department of the different theatres. He would, at any time, prefer going a street or two out of his way to omitting to pass a stage entrance, into which he always looks with a curious and searching eye. If he can only identify a popular actor in the street, he is in a perfect transport of delight; and no sooner meets him than he hurries back, and walks a few paces in front of him, so that he can turn round from time to time, and have a good stare at his features. He looks upon a theatrical fund dinner as one of the most enchanting festivities ever known; and thinks that to be a member of the Garrick Club, and see so many actors in their plain clothes, must be one of the highest gratifications the world can bestow.

The theatrical young gentleman is a constant half-price visitor at one or other of the theatres, and has an infinite relish for all pieces which display the fullest resources of the establishment. He likes to place implicit reliance upon the playbills when he goes to see a show-piece, and works himself up to such a pitch of enthusiasm as not only to believe (if the bills say so) that there are three hundred and seventy-five people on the stage at one time in the last scene, but is highly indignant with you unless you believe it also. He considers that if the stage be opened from the footlights to the back wall in any new play, the piece is a triumph of dramatic writing, and applauds accordingly. He has a great notion of trap-doors too, and thinks any character going down or coming up a trap (no matter whether he be an angel or a demon—they both do it occasionally) one of the most interesting feats in the whole range of scenic illusion.

Besides these acquirements, he has several veracious accounts to communicate of the private manners and customs of different actors, which, during the pauses of a quadrille, he usually communicates to his partner, or imparts to his neighbour at a supper-table. Thus he is advised that Mr. Liston always had a footman in gorgeous livery waiting at the side-scene with a brandy-bottle and tumbler, to administer half a pint or so of spirit to him every time he came off, without which assistance he must infallibly have fainted. He knows for a fact that, after an arduous part, Mr. George Bennett is put between two feather beds, to absorb the perspiration; and is credibly informed that Mr. Baker has, for many years,

submitted to a course of lukewarm toast-and-water, to qualify him to sustain his favourite characters. He looks upon Mr. FitzBall as the principal dramatic genius and poet of the day; but holds that there are great writers extant besides him,—in proof whereof he refers you to various dramas and melodramas recently produced, of which he takes in all the sixpenny and threepenny editions as fast as they appear.

The theatrical young gentleman is a great advocate for violence of emotion and redundancy of action. If a father has to curse a child upon the stage, he likes to see it done in the thorough-going style, with no mistake about it: to which end it is essential that the child should follow the father on her knees, and be knocked violently over on her face by the old gentleman as he goes into a small cottage, and shuts the door behind him. He likes to see a blessing invoked upon the young lady, when the old gentleman repents, with equal earnestness, and accompanied by the usual conventional forms, which consists of the old gentleman looking anxiously up into the clouds, as if to see whether it rains, and then spreading an imaginary tablecloth in the air over the young lady's head—soft music playing all the while. On these, and other points of a similar kind, the theatrical young gentleman is a great critic indeed. He is likewise very acute in judging of natural expressions of the passions, and knows precisely the frown, wink, nod, or leer, which stands for any one of them, or the means by which it may be converted into any other: as jealousy, with a good stamp of the right foot, becomes anger; or wildness, with the hands clasped before the throat, instead of tearing the wig, is passionate love. If you venture to express a doubt of the accuracy of any of these portraitures, the theatrical young gentleman assures you, with a haughty smile, that it always has been done in that way, and he supposes they are not going to change it at this time of day to please you; to which, of course, you meekly reply that you suppose not.

There are innumerable disquisitions of this nature, in which the theatrical young gentleman is very profound, especially to ladies whom he is most in the habit of entertaining with them; but, as we have no space to recapitulate them at greater length, we must rest content with calling the attention of the young ladies in general to the theatrical young gentlemen of their own acquaintance.

THE POETICAL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

TIME was, and not very long ago either, when a singular epidemic raged among the young gentlemen, vast numbers of whom, under the influence of the malady, tore off their neckerchiefs, turned down their shirt collars, and exhibited themselves in the open streets, with bare throats and dejected countenances, before the eyes of an astonished public. These were poetical young gentlemen. The custom was gradually found to be inconvenient, as involving the necessity of too much clean linen and too large washing bills, and these outward symptoms have consequently passed away; but we are disposed to think, notwithstanding, that the number of poetical young gentlemen is considerably on the increase.

We know a poetical young gentleman—a very poetical young gentleman. We do not mean to say that he is troubled with the gift of poesy in any remarkable degree, but his countenance is of a plaintive and melancholy cast, his manner is abstracted and bespeaks affliction of soul; he seldom has his hair cut, and often talks about being an outcast and wanting a kindred spirit; from which, as well as from many general observations in which he is wont to indulge concerning mysterious impulses and yearnings of the heart, and the supremacy of intellect gilding all earthly things with the glowing magic of immortal verse, it is clear to all his friends that he has been stricken poetical.

The favourite attitude of the poetical young gentleman is lounging on a sofa with his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, or sitting bolt upright in a high-backed chair, staring with very round eyes at the opposite wall. When he is in one of these positions, his mother, who is a worthy affectionate old soul, will give you a nudge to bespeak your attention without disturbing the abstracted one, and whisper, with a shake of the head, that John's imagination is at some extraordinary work or other, you may take her word for it. Hereupon John looks more fiercely intent upon vacancy than before, and, suddenly snatching a pencil from his pocket, puts down three words and a cross on the back of a card, sighs deeply, paces once or twice across the room, inflicts a most unmerciful slap upon his head, and walks moodily up to his dormitory.

The poetical young gentleman is apt to acquire peculiar notions of things, too, which plain ordinary people, unblessed with a poetical obliquity of vision, would suppose to be rather distorted. For instance, when the sickening murder and mangling of a wretched woman was affording delicious food wherewithal to gorge the insatiable curiosity of the public, our friend the poetical young gentleman was in ecstacies, not of disgust, but admiration. "Heavens!" cried the poetical young gentleman, "how grand! how great!" We ventured deferentially to inquire upon whom these epithets were bestowed, our humble thoughts oscillating between the police officer who found the criminal and the lock-keeper who found the head. "Upon whom!" exclaimed the poetical young gentleman in a frenzy of poetry, "upon whom should they be bestowed but upon the murderer?" And thereupon it came out, in a fine torrent of eloquence, that the murderer was a great spirit, a bold creature full of daring and nerve, a man of dauntless heart and determined courage, and withal a great casuist and able reasoner, as was fully demonstrated in his philosophical colloquies with the great and noble of the land. We held our peace, and meekly signified our indisposition to controvert these opinions: firstly, because we were no match at quotation for the poetical young gentleman; and secondly, because we felt it would be of little use our entering into any disputation if we were, being perfectly convinced that the respectable and immortal hero in question is not the first and will not be the last hanged gentleman upon whom false sympathy or diseased curiosity will be plentifully expended.

This was a stern mystic flight of the poetical young gentleman. In his milder and softer moments he occasionally lays down his neck-cloth and pens stanzas, which sometimes find their way into a Lady's Magazine, or the "Poet's Corner" of some country newspaper; or which, in default of either vent for his genius, adorn the rainbow leaves of a lady's album. These are generally written upon some such occasions as contemplating the Bank of England by midnight, or beholding Saint Paul's in a snowstorm; and when these gloomy objects fail to afford him inspiration, he pours forth his soul in a touching address to a violet, or a plaintive lament that he is no longer a child, but has gradually grown up.

The poetical young gentleman is fond of quoting passages from his favourite authors, who are all of the gloomy and desponding school. He has a great deal to say too about the world, and is much given to opining, especially if he has taken anything strong to drink, that there is nothing in it worth living for. He gives you to understand, however, that for the sake of society he means to bear his part in the tiresome play, manfully resisting the gratification of his own strong desire to make a premature exit, and consoles himself with the reflection that immortality has some chosen nook for himself and the other great spirits whom earth has chafed and wearied.

When the poetical young gentleman makes use of adjectives, they are all superlatives. Everything is of the grandest, greatest, noblest, mightiest, loftiest, or the lowest, meanest, obscurest, vilest, and most pitiful. He knows no medium; for enthusiasm is the soul of poetry, and who so enthusiastic as the poetical young gentleman?

"Mr. Milkwash," says a young lady as she unlocks her album to receive the young gentleman's original impromptu contribution, "how very silent you are; I think you must be in love!"

"Love!" cries the poetical young gentleman, starting from his seat by the fire, and terrifying the cat, who scampers off at full speed, "Love! that burning consuming passion; that ardour of the soul; that fierce glowing of the heart. Love! The withering blighted influence of hope misplaced and affection slighted. Love, did you say? Ha! ha! ha!"

With this, the poetical young gentleman laughs a laugh belonging only to poets and Mr. O. Smith of the Adelphi Theatre, and sits down, pen in hand, to throw off a page or two of verse in the biting, semi-atheistical-demoniac style, which, like the poetical young gentleman himself, is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

THE "THROWING-OFF" YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

THERE is a certain kind of impostor—a bragging, vaunting, puffing young gentleman—against whom we are desirous to warn that fairer part of the creation, to whom we more peculiarly devote these our labours. And we are particularly induced to lay especial stress upon this division of our subject, by a little dialogue we held some short time ago with an esteemed young lady of our acquaintance, touching a most gross specimen of this class of men. We had been urging all the absurdities of his conduct and conversation, and dwelling upon the impossibilities he constantly recounted—to which indeed we had not scrupled to prefix a certain hard little word of one syllable and three letters—when our fair friend, unable to maintain the contest any longer, reluctantly cried, "Well, he certainly has a habit of throwing-off, but then—" What then? Throw him off yourself, said we. And so she did, but not at our instance, for other reasons appeared, and it might have been better if she had done so at first.

The throwing-off young gentleman has so often a father possessed of vast property in some remote district of Ireland, that we look with some suspicion upon all young gentlemen who volunteer this description of themselves. The deceased grandfather of the throwing-off young gentleman was a man of immense possessions and untold wealth; the throwing-off young gentleman remembers, as well as if it were only yesterday, the deceased baronet's library, with its long rows of scarce and valuable books in superbly embossed bindings, arranged in cases reaching from the lofty ceiling to the oaken floor; and the fine antique chairs and tables, and the noble old castle of Ballykillbabaloo, with its splendid prospect of hill, and dale, and wood, and rich wild scenery, and the fine hunting stables, and the spacious courtyards, "and—and—everything upon the same magnificent scale," says the throwing-off young gentleman—"princely, quite princely. Ah!" And he sighs as if mourning over the fallen fortunes of his noble house.

The throwing-off young gentleman is a universal genius. At walking, running, rowing, swimming, and skating, he is unrivalled; at all games of chance or skill, at hunting, shooting, fishing, riding, driving, or amateur theatricals, no one can touch him—that is, *could* not, because he gives you carefully to understand, lest there should be any opportunity of testing his skill, that he is quite out of practice just now, and has been for some years. If you mention any beautiful girl of your common acquaintance in his hearing, the throwing-off young gentleman starts, smiles, and begs you not to mind him, for it was quite involuntary: people do say indeed that they were once engaged; but no: although she is a very fine girl, he was so situated at that time that he couldn't possibly encourage the—"but it 's of no use talking about it," he adds, interrupting himself. "She has got over it now, and I firmly hope and trust is happy." With this benevolent aspiration he nods his head in a mysterious manner, and whistling the first part of some popular air, thinks perhaps it will be better to change the subject.

There is another great characteristic of the throwing-off young gentleman, which is that he "happens to be acquainted" with a most extraordinary variety of people in all parts of the world. Thus in all disputed questions, when the throwing-off young gentleman has no argument to bring forward, he invariably happens to be acquainted with some distant person, intimately connected with the subject, whose testimony decides the point against you, to the great—may we say it?—to the great admiration of three young ladies out of every four, who consider the throwing-off young gentleman a very highly-connected young man, and a most charming person.

Sometimes the throwing-off young gentleman happens to look in upon a little family circle of young ladies who are quietly spending the evening together, and then indeed is he at the very height and summit of his glory; for it is to be observed that he by no means shines to equal advantage in the presence of men as in the society of over-credulous young ladies, which is his proper element. It is delightful to hear the number of pretty things the throwing-off young gentleman gives utterance to during tea, and still more so to observe the ease with which, from long practice and study, he delicately blends one compliment to a lady with two for himself.

"Did you ever see a more lovely blue than this flower, Mr. Caveton?" asks a young lady who, truth to tell, is rather smitten with the throwing-off young gentleman.

"Never," he replies, bending over the object of admiration, "never but in your eyes."

"Oh, Mr. Caveton!" cries the young lady, blushing of course.

"Indeed I speak the truth," replies the throwing-off young gentleman; "I never saw any approach to them. I used to think my cousin's blue eyes lovely, but they grow dim and colourless beside yours."

"Oh, a beautiful cousin, Mr. Caveton!"

replies the young lady, with that perfect artlessness which is the distinguishing characteristic of all young ladies; "an affair, of course."

"No; indeed—indeed you wrong me," rejoins the throwing-off young gentleman, with great energy. "I fervently hope that her attachment towards me may be nothing but the natural result of our close intimacy in childhood, and that in change of scene and among new faces she may soon overcome it. *I* love her. Think not so meanly of me, Miss Lowfield, I beseech, as to suppose that title, lands, riches, and beauty can influence *my* choice. The heart, the heart, Miss Lowfield."

Here the throwing-off young gentleman sinks his voice to a still lower whisper; and the young lady duly proclaims to all the other young ladies when they go upstairs to put their bonnets on, that Mr. Caveton's relations are all immensely rich, and that he is hopelessly beloved by title, lands, riches, and beauty.

We have seen a throwing-off young gentleman who, to our certain knowledge, was innocent of a note of music, and scarcely able to recognize a tune by ear, volunteer a Spanish air upon the guitar when he had previously satisfied himself that there was not such an instrument within a mile of the house.

We have heard another throwing-off young gentleman, after striking a note or two upon the piano, and accompanying it correctly (by dint of laborious practice) with his voice, assure a circle of wondering listeners that so acute was his ear that he was wholly unable to sing out of tune, let him try as he would. We have lived to witness the unmasking of another throwing-off young gentleman, who went out visiting in a military cap with a gold band and tassel, and who, after passing successfully for a captain and being lauded to the skies for his red whiskers, his bravery, his soldierly bearing and his pride, turned out to be the dishonest son of an honest linendraper in a small country town, and whom, if it were not for this fortunate exposure, we should not yet despair of encountering as the fortunate husband of some rich heiress. Ladies, ladies, the throwing-off young gentlemen are often swindlers, and always fools. So pray you avoid them.

THE YOUNG LADIES' YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

THIS young gentleman has several titles. Some young ladies consider him "a nice young man," others "a fine young man," others "quite a lady's man," others "a handsome man," others "a remarkably good-looking young man." With some young ladies he is "a perfect angel," and with others "quite a love." He is likewise a charming creature, a duck, and a dear.

The young ladies' young gentleman has usually a fresh colour and very white teeth, which latter articles, of course, he displays on every possible opportunity. He has brown or black hair, and whiskers of the same, if possible; but a slight tinge of red, or the hue which is vulgarly known as *sandy*, is not considered an objection. If his head and face be large, his nose prominent, and his figure square, he is an uncommonly fine young man, and worshipped accordingly. Should his whiskers meet beneath his chin, so much the better, though this is not absolutely insisted on; but he must wear an under-waistcoat, and smile constantly.

There was a great party got up by some party-loving friends of ours last summer to go and dine in Epping Forest. As we hold that such wild expeditions should never be indulged in, save by people of the smallest means who have no dinner at home, we should indubitably have excused ourself from attending if we had not recollected that the projectors of the excursion were always accompanied on such occasions by a choice sample of the young ladies' young gentleman, whom we were very anxious to have an opportunity of meeting. This determined us, and we went.

We were to make for Chigwell in four glass coaches, each with a trifling company of six or eight inside, and a little boy belonging to the projectors on the box, and to start from the residence of the projectors, Woburn Place, Russell Square, at half-past ten precisely. We arrived at the place of rendezvous at the appointed time, and found the glass coaches and the little boys quite ready, and divers young ladies and young gentlemen looking anxiously over the breakfast-parlour blinds, who appeared by no means so much gratified by our approach as we might have expected, but evidently wished we had been somebody else. Observing that our arrival in lieu of the unknown occasioned some disappointment, we ventured to inquire who was yet to come, when

we found, from the hasty reply of a dozen voices, that it was no other than the young ladies' young gentleman.

"I cannot imagine," said the mamma, "what has become of Mr. Balim—always so punctual, always so pleasant and agreeable. I am sure I can*not* think."

As these last words were uttered in that measured, emphatic manner which painfully announces that the speaker has not quite made up his or her mind what to say, but is determined to talk on nevertheless, the eldest daughter took up the subject, and hoped no accident had happened to Mr. Balim, upon which there was a general chorus of "Dear Mr. Balim!" and one young lady, more adventurous than the rest, proposed that an express should be straightway sent to dear Mr. Balim's lodgings. This, however, the papa resolutely opposed, observing, in what a short young lady behind us termed "quite a bearish way," that if Mr. Balim didn't choose to come, he might stop at home. At this all the daughters raised a murmur of "Oh, pa!" except one sprightly little girl of eight or ten years old, who, taking advantage of a pause in the discourse, remarked that perhaps Mr. Balim might have been married that morning, for which impertinent suggestion she was summarily ejected from the room by her eldest sister.

We were all in a state of great mortification and uneasiness, when one of the little boys, running into the room as airily as little boys usually run who have an unlimited allowance of animal food in the holidays, and keep their hands constantly forced down to the bottoms of very deep trouser-pockets when they take exercise, joyfully announced that Mr. Balim was at that moment coming up the street in a hackney cab; and the intelligence was confirmed beyond all doubt a minute afterwards by the entry of Mr. Balim himself, who was received with repeated cries of "Where have you been, you naughty creature?" whereunto the naughty creature replied, that he had been in bed, in consequence of a late party the night before, and had only just risen. The acknowledgment awakened a variety of agonizing fears that he had taken no breakfast; which appearing after a slight cross-examination to be the real state of the case, breakfast for one was immediately ordered, notwithstanding Mr. Balim's repeated protestations that he couldn't think of it. He did think of it, though, and thought better of it too, for he made a remarkably good meal when it came, and was assiduously served by a select knot of young ladies. It was quite delightful to see how he ate and drank, while one pair of fair hands poured out his coffee, and another put in the sugar, and another the milk; the rest of the company ever and anon casting angry glances at their watches, and the glass coaches, and the little boys looking on in an agony of apprehension lest it should begin to rain before we set out; it might have rained all day, after we were once too far to turn back again, and welcome, for aught they cared.

However, the cavalcade moved at length, every coachman being accommodated with a hamper between his legs something larger than a wheelbarrow; and the company being packed as closely as they possibly could in the carriages, "according," as one married lady observed, "to the immemorial custom, which was half the diversion of gipsy parties." Thinking it very likely it might be (we have never been able to discover the other half), we submitted to be stowed away with a cheerful aspect, and were fortunate enough to occupy one corner of a coach in which were one old lady, four young ladies, and the renowned Mr. Balim, the young ladies' young gentleman.

We were no sooner fairly off, than the young ladies' young gentleman hummed a fragment of an air, which induced a young lady to inquire whether he had danced to that the night before.

"By Heaven, then, I did," replied the young gentleman, "and with a lovely heiress; a superb creature, with twenty thousand pounds."

"You seem rather struck," observed another young lady.

"'Gad, she was a sweet creature," returned the young gentleman, arranging his hair.

"Of course *she* was struck too?" inquired the first young lady.

"How can you ask, love?" interposed the second; "could she fail to be?"

"Well, honestly I think she was," observed the young gentleman.

At this point of the dialogue the young lady who had spoken first, and who sat on the young gentleman's right, struck him a severe blow on the arm with a rosebud, and said he was a vain man—whereupon the young gentleman insisted on having the rosebud, and the young lady appealing for help to the other young ladies, a charming struggle ensued, terminating in the victory of the young gentleman and the capture of the rosebud. This little skirmish over, the married lady, who was the mother of the rosebud, smiled sweetly upon the young gentleman, and accused him of being a flirt; the young gentleman pleaded not guilty; a most interesting discussion took place upon the important point whether the young gentleman was a flirt or not, which, being an agreeable conversation of a light kind, lasted a considerable time. At length, a short silence occurring, the young ladies on either side of the young gentleman fell suddenly fast asleep; and the young gentleman, winking upon us to preserve silence, won a pair of gloves from each, thereby causing them to wake with equal suddenness and to scream very loud. The lively conversation to which this pleasantry gave rise lasted for

the remainder of the ride, and would have eked out a much longer one.

We dined rather more comfortably than people usually do under such circumstances, nothing having been left behind but the cork-screw and the bread. The married gentlemen were unusually thirsty, which they attributed to the heat of the weather; the little boys ate to inconvenience; mammas were very jovial, and their daughters very fascinating; and the attendants, being well-behaved men, got exceedingly drunk at a respectful distance.

We had our eye on Mr. Balim at dinner-time, and perceived that he flourished wonderfully, being still surrounded by a little group of young ladies, who listened to him as an oracle, while he ate from their plates and drank from their glasses in a manner truly captivating from its excessive playfulness. His conversation, too, was exceedingly brilliant. In fact, one elderly lady assured us that in the course of a little lively *badinage* on the subject of ladies' dresses, he had evinced as much knowledge as if he had been born and bred a milliner.

As such of the fat people who did not happen to fall asleep after dinner entered upon a most vigorous game at ball, we slipped away alone into a thicker part of the wood, hoping to fall in with Mr. Balim, the greater part of the young people having dropped off in twos and threes, and the young ladies' young gentleman among them. Nor were we disappointed, for we had not walked far when, peeping through the trees, we discovered him before us, and truly it was a pleasant thing to contemplate his greatness.

The young ladies' young gentleman was seated upon the ground, at the feet of a few young ladies who were reclining on a bank; he was so profusely decked with scarfs, ribands, flowers, and other pretty spoils, that he looked like a lamb—or perhaps a call would be a better simile—adorned for the sacrifice. One young lady supported a parasol over his interesting head, another held his hat, and a third his neckcloth, which in romantic fashion he had thrown off; the young gentleman himself, with his hand upon his breast, and his face moulded into an expression of the most honeyed sweetness, was warbling forth some choice specimens of vocal music in praise of female loveliness, in a style so exquisitely perfect, that we burst into an involuntary shout of laughter, and made a hasty retreat.

What charming fellows these young ladies' young gentlemen are! Ducks, dears, loves, angels, are all terms inadequate to express their merit. They are such amazingly, uncommonly, wonderfully nice men.

CONCLUSION.

As we have placed before the young ladies so many specimens of young gentlemen, and have also in the dedication of this volume given them to understand how much we reverence and admire their numerous virtues and perfections; as we have given them such strong reasons to treat us with confidence, and to banish, in our case, all that reserve and distrust of the male sex which, as a point of general behaviour, they cannot do better than preserve and maintain—we say, as we have done all this, we feel that now, when we have arrived at the close of our task, they may naturally press upon us the inquiry, what particular description of young gentlemen we can conscientiously recommend.

Here we are at a loss. We look over our list, and can neither reccommend the bashful young gentleman, nor the out-and-out young gentleman, nor the very friendly young gentleman, nor the military young gentleman, nor the political young gentleman, nor the domestic young gentleman, nor the censorious young gentleman, nor the funny young gentleman, nor the theatrical young gentleman, nor the poetical young gentleman, nor the throwing-off young gentleman, nor the young ladies' young gentleman.

As there are some good points about many of them, which still are not sufficiently numerous to render any one among them eligible, as a whole, our respectful advice to the young ladies is, to seek for a young gentleman who unites in himself the best qualities of all, and the worst weaknesses of none, and to lead him forthwith to the hymeneal altar, whether he will or no. And to the young lady who secures him, we beg to tender one short fragment of matrimonial advice, selected from many sound passages of a similar tendency, to be found in a letter written by Dean Swift to a young lady on her marriage.

"The grand affair of your life will be, to gain and preserve the esteem of your husband. Neither good-nature nor virtue will suffer

him to *esteem* you against his judgment; and although he is not capable of using you ill, yet you will in time grow a thing indifferent and perhaps contemptible, unless you can supply the loss of youth and beauty with more durable qualities. You have but a very few years to be young and handsome in the eyes of the world; and as few months to be so in the eyes of a husband who is not a fool; for I hope you do not still dream of charms and raptures, which marriage ever did, and ever will, put a sudden end to."

From the anxiety we express for the proper behaviour of the fortunate lady after marriage, it may possibly be inferred that the young gentleman to whom we have so delicately alluded is no other than ourself. Without in any way committing ourself upon this point, we have merely to observe, that we are ready to receive sealed offers containing a full specification of age, temper, appearance, and condition; but we beg it to be distinctly understood that we do not pledge ourself to accept the highest bidder.

These offers may be forwarded to the Publishers,

Messrs. CHAPMAN and HALL,
186 Strand, London;

to whom all pieces of plate and other testimonials of approbation from the young ladies generally, are respectfully requested to be addressed.

SKETCHES

OF

YOUNG COUPLES

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

AN URGENT REMONSTANCE, ETC.,

TO THE

GENTLEMEN OF ENGLAND

(BEING BACHELORS OR WIDOWERS),

The Remonstrance of their Faithful Fellow-Subject

SHEWETH,—

That Her Most Gracious Majesty Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith, did, on the 23rd day of November last past, declare and pronounce to Her Most Honourable Privy Council, Her Majesty's Most Gracious intention of entering into the bonds of wedlock.

That Her Most Gracious Majesty, in so making known Her Most Gracious intention to Her Most Honourable Privy Council, as aforesaid, did use and employ the words, "It is my intention to ally myself in marriage with Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha."

That the present is Bissextile, or Leap Year, in which it is held and considered lawful for any lady to offer and submit proposals of marriage to any gentleman, and to enforce and insist upon acceptance of the same under pain of a certain fine or penalty—to wit, one silk or satin dress of the first quality, to be chosen by the lady and paid (or owed) for by the gentleman.

That these and other the horrors and dangers with which the said Bissextile, or Leap Year, threatens the gentlemen of England on every occasion of its periodical return, have been greatly aggravated and augmented by the terms of Her Majesty's said Most Gracious communication, which have filled the heads of divers young ladies in this Realm with certain new ideas destructive to the peace of mankind, that never entered their imagination before.

That a case has occurred in Camberwell, in which a young lady informed her papa that "she intended to ally herself in marriage" with Mr. Smith, of Stepney; and that another, and a very distressing case, has occurred at Tottenham, in which a young lady not only stated her intention of allying herself in marriage with her cousin John, but, taking violent possession of her said cousin, actually married him.

That similar outrages are of constant occurrence, not only in the capital and its neighbourhood, but throughout the kingdom, and that unless the excited female populace be speedily checked and restrained in their lawless proceedings, most deplorable results must ensue therefrom; among which may be anticipated a most alarming increase in the population of the country, with which no efforts of the agricultural or manufacturing interest can possibly keep pace.

That there is strong reason to suspect the existence of a most extensive plot, conspiracy, or design, secretly contrived by vast numbers of single ladies in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and now extending its ramifications in every quarter of the land; the object and intent of which plainly appears to be the holding and solemnizing of an enormous and unprecedented number of marriages, on the day on which the nuptials of Her said Most Gracious Majesty are performed.

That such plot, conspiracy, or design, strongly savours of popery, as tending to the discomfiture of the Clergy of the Established Church, by entailing upon them great mental and physical exhaustion; and that such popish plots are fomented and encouraged by Her Majesty's Ministers, which clearly appears—not only from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs traitorously getting married while holding office under the Crown—but from Mr. O'Connell having been heard to declare and avow that if he had a daughter to marry, she should be married on the same day as Her said Most Gracious Majesty.

That such-arch plots, conspiracies, and designs, besides being fraught with danger to the Established Church, and (consequently) to the State, cannot fail to bring ruin and bankruptcy upon a large class of Her Majesty's subjects; as a great and sudden increase in the number of married men occasioning the comparative desertion (for a time) of taverns, hotels, billiard-rooms, and gaming-houses, will deprive the proprietors of their accustomed profits and returns.

And in further proof of the depth and baseness of such designs, it may be here observed, that all proprietors of taverns, hotels, billiard-rooms, and gaming-houses, are (especially the last) solemnly devoted to the Protestant religion.

For all these reasons, and many others of no less gravity and import, an urgent appeal is made to the gentlemen of England (being bachelors or widowers) to take immediate steps for convening a public meeting: to consider of the best and surest means of averting the dangers with which they are threatened by the recurrence of Bissextile, or Leap Year, and the additional sensation created among single ladies by the terms of Her Majesty's most gracious Declaration; to take measures, without delay, for resisting the said single ladies, and counteracting their evil designs; and to pray Her Majesty to dismiss her present Ministers, and to summon to her counsels those distinguished gentlemen in various honourable professions who, by insulting on all occasions the only Lady in England who can be insulted with safety, have given a sufficient guarantee to Her Majesty's loving subjects that they, at least, are qualified to make war with women, and are already expert in the use of those weapons which are common to the lowest and most abandoned of the sex.

SKETCHES OF YOUNG COUPLES.

THE YOUNG COUPLE.

THERE is to be a wedding this morning at the corner house in the terrace. The pastry-cook's people have been there half a dozen times already. All day yesterday there was a great stir and bustle, and they were up this morning as soon as it was light. Miss Emma Fielding is going to be married to young Mr. Harvey.

Heaven alone can tell in what bright colours this marriage is painted upon the mind of the little housemaid at Number Six, who has hardly slept a wink all night with thinking of it, and now stands on the unswept doorsteps, leaning upon her broom, and looking wistfully towards the enchanted house. Nothing short of omniscience can divine what visions of the baker, or the greengrocer, or the smart and most insinuating butterman, are flitting across her mind; what thoughts of how she would dress on such an occasion, if she were a lady; of how she would dress if she were only a bride; of how cook would dress, being bridesmaid, conjointly with her sister "in place" at Fulham; and how the clergyman, deeming them so many ladies, would be quite humbled and respectful. What daydreams of hope and happiness!—of life being one perpetual holiday, with no master and no mistress to grant or withhold it—of every Sunday being a Sunday out—of pure freedom as to curls and ringlets, and no obligation to hide fine heads of hair in caps,—what pictures of happiness, vast and immense to her, but utterly ridiculous to us, bewilder the brain of the little housemaid at Number Six, all called into existence by the wedding at the corner!

We smile at such things, and so we should, though perhaps for a better reason than commonly presents itself. It should be pleasant to us to know that there are notions of happiness so moderate and limited, since upon those who entertain them happiness and lightness of heart are very easily bestowed.

But the little housemaid is awakened from her reverie, for forth from the door of the magical corner house there runs towards her, all fluttering in smart new dress and streaming ribands, her friend Jane Adams, who comes, all out of breath, to redeem a solemn promise of taking her in, under cover of the confusion, to see the breakfast-table spread forth in state, and—sight of sights!—her young mistress ready dressed for the church.

And there, in good truth, when they have stolen upstairs on tiptoe and edged themselves in at the chamber door, there is Miss Emma, "looking like the sweetest picture," in a white chip bonnet, and orange flower, and all other elegancies becoming a bride (with the make, shape, and quality of every article of which the girl is perfectly familiar in one moment, and never forgets to her dying day); and there is Miss Emma's mamma in tears, and Miss Emma's papa comforting her, and saying how that of course she has been long looking forward to this, and how happy she ought to be; and there, too, is Miss Emma's sister with her arms round her neck, and the other bridesmaids, all smiles and tears, quieting the children, who would cry more but that they are so finely dressed, and yet sob for fear sister Emma should be taken away; and it is all so affecting, that the two servant-girls cry more than anybody, and Jane Adams, sitting down upon the stairs, when they have crept away, declares that her legs tremble so that she don't know what to do, and that she will say for Miss Emma, that she never had a hasty word from her, and that she does hope and pray she may be happy.

But Jane soon comes round again, and then surely there never was anything like the breakfast-table—glittering with plate and china, and set out with flowers and sweets, and long-necked bottles, in the most sumptuous and dazzling manner. In the centre, too, is the mighty charm, the cake, glistening with frosted sugar, and garnished beautiful. They agree that there ought to be a little Cupid under one of the barley-sugar temples, or at least two hearts and an arrow; but with this exception there is nothing to wish for, and a table could not be handsomer. As they arrive at this conclusion, who should come in but Mr. John, to whom Jane says that it 's only Anne from Number Six; and John says *he* knows, for he 's often winked his eye down the area, which causes Anne to blush and look confused. She is going away, indeed, when Mr. John will have it that she must drink a glass of wine, and he says never mind it 's being early in the morning, it won't hurt her. So they shut the door, and pour out the wine, and Anne drinking Jane's health, and adding, "and here 's wishing you yours, Mr. John," drinks it in a great many sips, Mr.

John all the time making jokes appropriate to the occasion. At last Mr. John, who has waxed bolder by degrees, pleads the usage at weddings, and claims the privilege of a kiss, which he obtains after a great scuffle; and footsteps being now heard on the stairs, they disperse suddenly.

By this time, a carriage has driven up to convey the bride to church, and Anne of Number Six prolonging the process of "cleaning her door," has the satisfaction of beholding the bride and bridesmaids, and the papa and mamma, hurry into the same, and drive rapidly off. Nor is this all, for soon other carriages begin to arrive with a posse of company, all beautifully dressed, at whom she could stand and gaze for ever; but having something else to do, is compelled to take one last long look, and shut the street door.

And now the company have gone down to breakfast, and tears have given place to smiles, for all the corks are out of the long-necked bottles, and their contents are disappearing rapidly. Miss Emma's papa is at the top of the table, Miss Emma's mamma at the bottom, and beside the latter are Miss Emma herself and her husband—admitted on all hands to be the handsomest and most interesting young couple ever known. All down both sides of the table, too, are various young ladies, beautiful to see, and various young gentlemen who seem to think so; and there, in a post of honour, is an unmarried aunt of Miss Emma's, reported to possess unheard-of riches, and to have expressed vast testamentary intentions respecting her favourite niece and new nephew. This lady has been very liberal and generous already, as the jewels worn by the bride abundantly testify, but that is nothing to what she means to do, or even to what she has done, for she put herself in close communication with the dressmaker three months ago, and prepared a wardrobe (with some articles worked by her own hands) fit for a princess. People may call her an old maid, and so she may be, but she is neither cross nor ugly for all that; on the contrary, she is very cheerful and pleasant-looking, and very kind and tender-hearted, which is no matter of surprise except to those who yield to popular prejudices without thinking why, and will never grow wiser, and never know better.

Of all the company, though, none are more pleasant to behold or better pleased with themselves than two young children, who, in honour of the day, have seats among the guests. Of these, one is a little fellow of six or eight years old, brother to the bride, and the other a girl of the same age, or something younger, whom he calls "his wife." The real bride and bridegroom are not more devoted than they: he all love and attention, and she all blushes and fondness, toying with a little bouquet which he gave her this morning, and placing the scattered rose-leaves in her bosom with nature's own coquettishness. They have dreamt of each other in their quiet dreams, these children, and their little hearts have been nearly broken when the absent one has been dispraised in jest. When will there come in after life a passion so earnest, generous, and true as theirs? what, even in its gentlest realities, can have the grace and charm that hover round such fairy lovers?

By this time the merriment and happiness of the feast have gained their height; certain ominious looks begin to be exchanged between the bridesmaids, and somehow it gets whispered about that the carriage which is to take the young couple into the country has arrived. Such members of the party as are most disposed to prolong its enjoyments, affect to consider this a false alarm, but it turns out too true, being speedily confirmed, first by the retirement of the bride and a select file of intimates who are to prepare her for her journey; and, secondly, by the withdrawal of the ladies generally. To this there ensues an awkward pause, in which everybody essays to be facetious, and nobody succeeds. At length the bridegroom makes a mysterious disappearance in obedience to some equally mysterious signal, and the table is deserted.

Now, for at least six weeks last past it has been solemnly devised and settled that the young couple should go away in secret, but they no sooner appear without the door than the drawing-room windows are blocked up with ladies waving their handkerchiefs and kissing their hands, and the dining-room panes with gentlemen's faces beaming a farewell in every queer variety of its expression. The hall and steps are crowded with servants in white favours, mixed up with particular friends and relations who have darted out to say good bye; and foremost in the group are the tiny lovers arm-in-arm, thinking, with fluttering hearts, what happiness it would be to dash away together in that gallant coach, and never part again.

The bride has barely time for one hurried glance at her old home, when the steps rattle, the door slams, the horses clatter on the pavement, and they have left it far away.

A knot of women-servants still remain clustered in the hall whispering among themselves, and there of course is Anne from Number Six, who has made another escape on some plea or other, and been an admiring witness of the departure. There are two points on which Anne expatiates over and over again, without the smallest appearance of fatigue or intending to leave off: one is, that she "never see in all her life such a—oh, such a angel of a gentleman as Mr. Harvey;" and the other, that she "can't tell how it is, but it don't seem a bit like a work-a-day, or a Sunday neither, it's all so unsettled and unregular."

THE FORMAL COUPLE.

THE formal couple are the most prim, cold, immovable, and unsatisfactory people on the face of the earth. Their faces, voices, dress, house, furniture, walk, and manner are all the essence of formality, unrelieved by one redeeming touch of frankness, heartiness, or nature.

Everything with the formal couple resolves itself into a matter of form. They don't call upon you on your account, but their own; not to see how you are, but to show how they are; it is not a ceremony to do honour to you, but to themselves; not due to your position, but to theirs. If one of a friend's children dies, the formal couple are as sure and punctual in sending to the house as the undertaker; if a friend's family be increased, the monthly nurse is not more attentive than they. The formal couple, in fact, joyfully seize all occasions of testifying their good breeding and precise observance of the little usages of society; and for you, who are the means to this end, they care as much as a man does for the tailor who has enabled him to cut a figure, or a woman for the milliner who has assisted her to a conquest.

Having an extensive connexion among that kind of people who make acquaintances and eschew friends, the formal gentleman attends from time to time a great many funerals, to which he is formally invited, and to which he formally goes, as returning a call for the last time. Here his deportment is of the most faultless description; he knows the exact pitch of voice it is proper to assume, the sombre look he ought to wear, the melancholy tread which should be his gait for the day. He is perfectly acquainted with all the dreary courtesies to be observed in a mourning-coach; knows when to sigh, and when to hide his nose in the white handkerchief; and looks into the grave and shakes his head, when the ceremony is concluded, with the sad formality of a mute.

"What kind of funeral was it?" says the formal lady, when he returns home.

"Oh," replies the formal gentleman, "there never was such a gross and disgusting impropriety. There were no feathers."

"No feathers!" cries the lady, as if on wings of black feathers dead people fly to heaven, and, lacking them, they must of necessity go elsewhere.

Her husband shakes his head, and further adds that they had seed cake instead of plum cake, and that it was all white wine.

"All white wine!" exclaims his wife.

"Nothing but sherry and Madeira," says the husband.

"What! no port?"

"Not a drop. No port, no plums, and no feathers."

"You will recollect, my dear," says the formal lady, in a voice of stately reproof, "that when we first met this poor man who is now dead and gone, and he took that very strange course of addressing me at dinner without being previously introduced, I ventured to express my opinion that the family were quite ignorant of etiquette, and very imperfectly acquainted with the decencies of life. You have now had a good opportunity of judging for yourself; and all I have to say is that I trust you will never go to a funeral *there* again."

"My dear," replies the formal gentleman, "I never will."

So the informal deceased is cut in his grave; and the formal couple, when they tell the story of the funeral, shake their heads, and wonder what some people's feelings *are* made of, and what their notions of propriety *can* be.

If the formal couple have a family (which they sometimes have), they are not children, but little, pale, sour, sharp-nosed men and women, and so exquisitely brought up that they might be very old dwarfs for anything that appeareth to the contrary. Indeed, they are so acquainted with forms and conventionalities, and conduct themselves with such strict decorum, that to see the little girl break a looking-glass in some wild outbreak, or the little boy kick his parents, would be, to any visitor, an unspeakable relief and consolation.

The formal couple are always sticklers for what is rigidly proper, and have a great readiness in detecting hidden impropriety of speech or thought, which by less scrupulous people would be wholly unsuspected. Thus, if they pay a visit to the theatre, they sit all night in a perfect agony lest anything improper or immoral should proceed from the stage; and if anything should happen to be said which admits of a double construction, they never fail to take it up directly, and to express by their looks the great outrage which their feelings have sustained. Perhaps this is their chief reason for absenting themselves almost entirely from places of public amusement. They go sometimes to the exhibition of the Royal Academy; but that is often more shocking than the stage itself, and the formal lady thinks that it really is high time Mr. Etty was prosecuted and made a public example of.

We made one at a christening party not long since, where there were amongst the guests a formal couple, who suffered the acutest torture from certain jokes incidental to such an occasion, cut—and very likely dried also—by one of the godfathers; a red-faced elderly gentleman, who, being highly popular with the rest of the company, had it all his own way, and was in great spirits. It was at supper-

time that this gentleman came out in full force. We, being of a grave and quiet demeanour, had been chosen to escort the formal lady downstairs, and, sitting beside her, had a favourable opportunity of observing her emotions. We have a shrewd suspicion that, in the very beginning, and in the first blush —literally the first blush—of the matter, the formal lady had not felt quite certain whether the being present at such a ceremony, and encouraging, as it were, the public exhibition of a baby, was not an act involving some degree of indelicacy and impropriety; but certain we are, that when the baby's health was drunk, and allusions were made, by a grey-headed gentleman proposing it, to the time when he had dandled in his arms the young Christian's mother,—certain we are that then the formal lady took the alarm, and recoiled from the old gentleman as from a hoary profligate. Still she bore it; she fanned herself with an indignant air, but still she bore it. A comic song was sung, involving a confession from some imaginary gentleman that he had kissed a female, and yet the formal lady bore it. But when at last, the health of the godfather before-mentioned being drunk, the godfather rose to return thanks, and in the course of his observations darkly hinted at babies yet unborn, and even contemplated the possibility of the subject of that festival having brothers and sisters, the formal lady could endure no more, but, bowing slightly round, and sweeping haughtily past the offender, left the room in tears, under the protection of the formal gentleman.

THE LOVING COUPLE.

THERE cannot be a better practical illustration of the wise saw and ancient instance, that there may be too much of a good thing, than is presented by a loving couple. Undoubtedly it is meet and proper that two persons joined together in holy matrimony should be loving, and unquestionably it is pleasant to know and see that they are so; but there is a time for all things, and the couple who happen to be always in a loving state before company are wellnigh intolerable.

And in taking up this position we would have it distinctly understood that we do not seek alone the sympathy of bachelors, in whose objection to loving couples we recognize interested motives to personal considerations. We grant that to that unfortunate class of society there may be something very irritating, tantalizing, and provoking, in being compelled to witness those gentle endearments and chaste interchanges which to loving couples are quite the ordinary business of life. But while we recognize the natural character of the prejudice to which these unhappy men are subject, we can neither receive their biassed evidence, nor address ourself to their inflamed and angered minds. Dispassionate experience is our only guide, and in these moral essays we seek no less to reform hymeneal offenders than to hold out a timely warning to all rising couples, and even to those who have not yet set forth upon their pilgrimage towards the matrimonial altar.

Let all couples, present or to come, therefore, profit by the example of Mr. and Mrs. Leaver themselves—a loving couple in the first degree.

Mr. and Mrs. Leaver are pronounced by Mrs. Starling, a widow lady who lost her husband when she was young, and lost herself about the same time—for by her own count she has never since grown five years older—to be a perfect model of wedded felicity. "You would suppose," says the romantic lady, "that they were lovers only just now engaged. Never was such happiness! They are so tender, so affectionate, so attached to each other, so enamoured, that positively nothing can be more charming."

"Augusta, my soul," says Mr. Leaver.

"Augustus, my life," replies Mrs. Leaver.

"Sing some little ballad, darling," quoth Mr. Leaver.

"I couldn't, indeed, dearest," returns Mrs. Leaver.

"Do, my dove," says Mr. Leaver.

"I couldn't possibly, my love," replies Mrs. Leaver, "and it 's very naughty of you to ask me."

"Naughty, darling!" cries Mr. Leaver.

"Yes, very naughty, and very cruel," returns Mrs. Leaver, "for you know I have a sore throat, and that to sing would give me great pain. You 're a monster, and I hate you. Go away!"

Mrs. Leaver has said "go away" because Mr. Leaver has tapped her under the chin. Mr. Leaver, not doing as he is bid, but, on the contrary, sitting down beside her, Mrs. Leaver slaps Mr. Leaver, and Mr. Leaver in

return slaps Mrs. Leaver; and it being now time for all persons present to look the other way, they look the other way, and hear a still small sound as of kissing, at which Mrs. Starling is thoroughly enraptured, and whispers her neighbour that if all married couples were like that, what a heaven this earth would be.

The loving couple are at home when this occurs, and maybe only three or four friends are present; but, unaccustomed to reserve upon this interesting point, they are pretty much the same abroad. Indeed, upon some occasions, such as a picnic or a water party, their lovingness is even more developed, as we had an opportunity last summer of observing in person.

There was a great water party made up to go to Twickenham and dine, and afterwards dance in an empty villa by the river-side, hired expressly for the purpose. Mr. and Mrs. Leaver were of the same company, and it was our fortune to have a seat in the same boat, which was an eight-oared galley, manned by amateurs, with a blue-striped awning of the same pattern as their guernsey shirts, and a dingy-red flag of the same shade as the whiskers of the stroke oar. A coxswain being appointed, and all other matters adjusted, the eight gentlemen threw themselves into strong paroxysms, and pulled up with the tide, stimulated by the compassionate remarks of the ladies, who one and all exclaimed that it seemed an immense exertion, as indeed it did. At first we raced the other boat, which came alongside in gallant style; but this being found an unpleasant amusement, as giving rise to a great quantity of splashing, and rendering the cold pies and other viands very moist, it was unanimously voted down, and we were suffered to shoot ahead, while the second boat followed ingloriously in our wake.

It was at this time that we first recognized Mr. Leaver. There were two firemen-watermen in the boat, lying by until somebody was exhausted; and one of them, who had taken upon himself the direction of affairs, was heard to cry out in a gruff voice, "Pull away, number two!—give it her, number two!—take a longer reach, number two!—now, number two, sir, think you're winning a boat!" The greater part of the company had no doubt begun to wonder which of the striped guernseys it might be that stood in need of such encouragement, when a stifled shriek from Mrs. Leaver confirmed the doubtful and informed the ignorant; and Mr. Leaver, still further disguised in a straw hat and no neckcloth, was observed to be in a fearful perspiration, and failing visibly. Nor was the general consternation diminished at this instant by the same gentleman (in the performance of an accidental aquatic feat, termed "catching a crab") plunging suddenly backward, and displaying nothing of himself to the company but two violently struggling legs. Mrs. Leaver shrieked again several times, and cried piteously, "Is he dead? Tell me the worst. Is he dead?"

Now, a moment's reflection might have convinced the loving wife, that unless her husband were endowed with most surprising powers of muscular action, he never could be dead while he kicked so hard; but still Mrs. Leaver cried, "Is he dead? Is he dead?" and still everybody else cried, "No, no, no," until such time as Mr. Leaver was replaced in a sitting posture, and his oar (which had been going through all kinds of wrongheaded performances on its own account) was once more put in his hand, by the exertion of the two firemen-watermen. Mrs. Leaver then exclaimed, "Augustus, my child, come to me." And Mr. Leaver said, "Augusta, my love, compose yourself, I am not injured." But Mrs. Leaver cried again more piteously than before, "Augustus, my child, come to me." And now the company generally, who seemed to be apprehensive that if Mr. Leaver remained where he was, he might contribute more than his proper share towards the drowning of the party, disinterestedly took part with Mrs. Leaver, and said he really ought to go, and that he was not strong enough for such violent exercise, and ought never to have undertaken it. Reluctantly Mr. Leaver went and laid himself down at Mrs. Leaver's feet, and Mrs. Leaver stooping over him, said, "Oh, Augustus, how could you terrify me so?" And Mr. Leaver said, "Augusta, my sweet, I never meant to terrify you." And Mrs. Leaver said, "You are faint, my dear." And Mr. Leaver said, "I am rather so, my love." And they were very loving indeed under Mrs. Leaver's veil, until at length Mr. Leaver came forth again, and pleasantly asked if he had not heard something said about bottled stout and sandwiches.

Mrs. Starling, who was one of the party, was perfectly delighted with this scene, and frequently murmured half-aside, "What a loving couple you are!" or, "How delightful it is to see man and wife so happy together!" To us she was quite poetical (for we are a kind of cousins), observing that hearts beating in unison like that made life a Paradise of sweets, and that when kindred creatures are drawn together by sympathies so fine and delicate, what more than mortal happiness did not our souls partake! To all this we answered "Certainly," or, "Very true," or merely sighed, as the case might be. At every new act of the loving couple, the widow's admiration broke out afresh; and when Mrs. Leaver would not permit Mr. Leaver to keep his hat off, lest the sun should strike to his head and give him a brain fever, Mrs. Starling actually shed tears, and said it reminded her of Adam and Eve.

The loving couple were thus loving all the the way to Twickenham, but when we arrived there (by which time the amateur crew looked

very thirsty and vicious), they were more playful than ever, for Mrs. Leaver threw stones at Mr. Leaver, and Mr. Leaver ran after Mrs. Leaver on the grass in a most innocent and enchanting manner. At dinner, too, Mr. Leaver *would* steal Mrs. Leaver's tongue, and Mrs. Leaver would retaliate upon Mr. Leaver's fowl; and, when Mrs. Leaver was going to take some lobster-salad, Mr. Leaver wouldn't let her have any, saying that it made her ill, and she was always sorry for it afterwards, which afforded Mrs. Lever an opportunity of pretending to be cross, and showing many other prettinesses. But this was merely the smiling surface of their loves, not the mighty depths of the stream, down to which the company, to say the truth, dived rather unexpectedly from the following accident. It chanced that Mr. Lever took upon himself to propose the bachelors who had first originated the notion of that entertainment, in doing which he affected to regret that he was no longer of their body himself, and pretended greviously to lament his fallen state. This Mrs. Leaver's feelings could not brook, even in jest, and consequently, exclaiming aloud, "He loves me not! he loves me not!" she fell in a very pitiable state into the arms of Mrs. Starling, and, directly becoming insensible, was conveyed by that lady and her husband into another room. Presently Mr. Leaver came running back to know if there was a medical gentleman in company, and as there was (in what company is there not?), both Mr. Leaver and the medical gentleman hurried away together.

The medical gentleman was the first who returned, and among his intimate friends he was observed to laugh and wink, and look as unmedical as might be; but, when Mr. Leaver came back, he was very solemn, and in answer to all inquiries, shook his head, and remarked that Augusta was far too sensitive to be trifled with — an opinion which the widow subsequently confirmed. Finding that she was in no imminent peril, however, the rest of the party betook themselves to dancing on the green, and very merry and happy they were, and a vast quantity of flirtation there was, the last circumstance being no doubt attributable, partly to the fineness of the weather, and partly to the locality, which is well known to be favourable to all harmless recreations.

In the bustle of the scene, Mr. and Mrs. Leaver stole down to the boat and disposed themselves under the awning, Mrs. Leaver reclining her head upon Mr. Leaver's shoulder, and Mr. Leaver grasping her hand with fervour, and looking in her face from time to time with a melancholy and sympathetic aspect. The widow sat apart, feigning to be occupied with a book, but stealthily observing them from behind her fan; and the two firemen-watermen, smoking their pipes on the bank hard by, nudged each other, and grinned in enjoyment of the joke. Very few of the party missed the loving couple, and the few who did heartily congratulated each other on their disappearance.

THE CONTRADICTORY COUPLE.

One would suppose that two people who are to pass their whole lives together, and must necessarily be very often alone with each other, could find little pleasure in mutual contradiction; and yet what is more common than a contradictory couple?

The contradictory couple agree in nothing but contradiction. They return home from Mrs. Bluebottle's dinner party each in an opposite corner of the coach, and do not exchange a syllable until they have been seated for at least twenty minutes by the fireside at home, when the gentleman, raising his eyes from the stove, all at once breaks the silence:

"What a very extraordinary thing it is," says he, "that you *will* contradict, Charlotte!"

"*I* contradict!" cries the lady; "but that's just like you."

"What's like me?" says the gentleman sharply.

"Saying that I contradict you," replies the lady.

"Do you mean to say that you do *not* contradict me?" retorts the gentleman. "Do you mean to say that you have not been contradicting me the whole of this day? Do you mean to tell me now that you have not?"

"I mean to tell you nothing of the kind," replies the lady quietly; "when you are wrong of course I shall contradict you."

During this dialogue the gentleman has been taking his brandy and water on one side of the fire, and the lady, with her dressing-case on the table, has been curling her hair on the other. She now lets down her back hair, and proceeds to brush it, preserving at the same time an air of conscious rectitude

and suffering virtue, which is intended to exasperate the gentleman, and does so.

"I do believe," he says, taking the spoon out of his glass, and tossing it on the table, "that of all the obstinate, positive, wrong-headed creatures that were ever born, you are the most so, Charlotte."

"Certainly, certainly, have it your own way, pray. You see how much *I* contradict you," rejoins the lady.

"Of course you didn't contradict me at dinner-time—oh no, not you!" says the gentleman.

"Yes, I did," says the lady.

"Oh, you did," cries the gentleman; "you admit that?"

"If you call that contradiction, I do," the lady answers; "and I say again, Edward, that when I know you are wrong, I will contradict you. I am not your slave."

"Not my slave!" repeats the gentleman, bitterly; "and you still mean to say that in the Blackburns' new house there are not more than fourteen doors, including the door of the wine-cellar?"

"I mean to say," retorts the lady, beating time with her hair-brush on the palm of her hand, "that in that house there are fourteen doors, and no more."

"Well, then," cries the gentleman, rising in despair, and pacing the room with rapid strides. "By G—, this is enough to destroy a man's intellect, and drive him mad!"

By-and-bye the gentleman comes to a little, and passing his hand gloomily across his forehead, re-seats himself in his former chair. There is a long silence, and this time the lady begins.

"I appealed to Mr. Jenkins, who sat next to me on the sofa in the drawing-room during tea—"

"Morgan, you mean," interrupts the gentleman.

"I do not mean anything of the kind," answers the lady.

"Now, by all that is aggravating and impossible to bear," cries the gentleman, clenching his hands and looking upwards in agony, "she is going to insist upon it that Morgan is Jenkins!"

"Do you take me for a perfect fool?" exclaims the lady; "do you suppose I don't know the one from the other? Do you suppose I don't know that the man in the blue coat was Mr. Jenkins?"

"Jenkins in a blue coat!" cries the gentleman, with a groan; "Jenkins in a blue coat! a man who would suffer death rather than wear anything but brown!"

"Do you dare charge me with telling an untruth?" demands the lady, bursting into tears.

"I charge you, ma'am," retorts the gentleman, starting up, "with being a monster of contradiction, a monster of aggravation, a—a—a—Jenkins in a blue coat! What have I done that I should be doomed to hear such statements?"

Expressing himself with great scorn and anguish, the gentleman takes up his candle and stalks off to bed, where, feigning to be fast asleep when the lady comes upstairs, drowned in tears, murmuring lamentations over her hard fate, and indistinct intentions of consulting her brothers, he undergoes the secret torture of hearing her exclaim between whiles, "I know there are only fourteen doors in the house, I know it was Mr. Jenkins, I know he had a blue coat on, and I would say it as positively as I do now if they were the last words I had to speak!"

If the contradictory couple are blessed with children, they are not the less contradictory on that account. Master James and Miss Charlotte present themselves after dinner, and being in perfect good humour, and finding their parents in the same amiable state, augur from these appearances half a glass of wine apiece, and other extraordinary indulgences. But unfortunately Master James, growing talkative upon such prospects, asks his mamma how tall Mrs. Parsons is, and whether she is not six feet high; to which his mamma replies, "Yes, she should think she was, for Mrs. Parsons is a very tall lady indeed; quite a giantess."

"For Heaven's sake, Charlotte," cries her husband, "do not tell the child such preposterous nonsense. Six feet high!"

"Well," replies the lady, "surely I may be permitted to have an opinion; my opinion is that she is six feet high—at least six feet."

"Now, you know, Charlotte," retorts the gentleman sternly, "that that is *not* your opinion; that you have no such idea; and that you only say this for the sake of contradiction."

"You are exceedingly polite," his wife replies. "To be wrong about such a paltry question as anybody's height would be no great crime; but, I say again that I believe Mrs. Parsons to be six feet — more than six feet; nay, I believe you to know her to be full six feet, and only say she is not, because I say she is."

This taunt disposes the gentleman to become violent; but he checks himself, and is content to mutter, in a haughty tone, "Six feet—ha! ha! Mrs. Parsons six feet!" and the lady answers, "Yes, six feet. I am sure I am glad you are amused, and I'll say it again—six feet."

Thus the subject gradually drops off, and the contradiction begins to be forgotten, when Master James, with some undefined notion of making himself agreeable, and putting things to rights again, unfortunately asks his mamma what the moon is made of; which gives her occasion to say that he had better not ask her, for she is always wrong, and never can

be right; that he only exposes her to contradiction by asking any question of her; and that he had better ask his papa, who is infallible, and never can be wrong. Papa, smarting under this attack, gives a terrible pull at the bell, and says that if the conversation is to proceed in this way, the children had better be removed. Removed they are, after a few tears and many struggles; and papa having looked at mamma sideways for a minute or two, with a baleful eye, draws his pocket-handkerchief over his face, and composes himself for his after-dinner nap.

The friends of the contradictory couple often deplore their frequent disputes, though they rather make light of them at the same time; observing that there is no doubt they are very much attached to each other, and that they never quarrel except about trifles. But neither the friends of the contradictory couple, nor the contradictory couple themselves, reflect that, as the most stupendous objects in nature are but vast collections of minute particles, so the slightest and least considered trifles make up the sum of human happiness or misery.

THE COUPLE WHO DOTE UPON THEIR CHILDREN.

THE couple who dote upon their children have usually a great many of them—six or eight at least. The children are either the healthiest in the world, or the most unfortunate in existence; in either case, they are equally the theme of their doting parents, and equally a source of mental anguish and irritation to their doting parents' friends.

The couple who dote upon their children recognize no dates but those connected with their births, accidents, illnesses, or remarkable deeds. They keep a mental almanac with a vast number of innocents' days, all in red letters. They recollect the last coronation, because on that day little Tom fell down the kitchen-stairs; the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, because it was on the Fifth of November that Ned asked whether wooden legs were made in heaven and cocked hats grew in gardens. Mrs. Whiffler will never cease to recollect the last day in the old year as long as she lives, for it was on that day that the baby had the four red spots on its nose which they took for measles; nor Christmas Day, for twenty-one days after Christmas Day the twins were born; nor Good Friday, for it was on a Good Friday that she was frightened by the donkey-cart when she was in the family way with Georgiana. The movable feasts have no motion for Mr. and Mrs. Whiffler, but remain pinned down tight and fast to the shoulders of some small child, from whom they can never be separated any more. Time was made, according to their creed, not for slaves, but for girls and boys; the restless sands in his glass are but little children at play.

As we have already intimated, the children of this couple can know no medium. They are either prodigies of good health or prodigies of bad health; whatever they are, they must be prodigies. Mr. Whiffler must have to describe at his office such excruciating agonies constantly undergone by his eldest boy, as nobody else's eldest boy ever underwent; or he must be able to declare that there never was a child endowed with such amazing health, such an indomitable constitution, and such a cast-iron frame, as his child. His children must be, in some respect or other, above and beyond the children of all other people. To such an extent is this feeling pushed, that we were once slightly acquainted with a lady and gentleman who carried their heads so high and became so proud after their youngest child fell out of a two-pair-of-stairs window without hurting himself much, that the greater part of their friends were obliged to forego their acquaintance. But perhaps this may be an extreme case, and one not justly entitled to be considered as a precedent of general application.

If a friend happen to dine in a friendly way with one of these couples who dote upon their children, it is nearly impossible for him to divert the conversation from their favourite topic. Everything reminds Mr. Whiffler of Ned, or Mrs. Whiffler of Mary Anne, or of the time before Ned was born, or the time before Mary Anne was thought of. The slightest remark, however harmless in itself, will awaken slumbering recollections of the twins. It is impossible to steer clear of them; they will come uppermost, let the poor man do what he may. Ned has been known to be lost sight of for half an hour, Dick has been forgotten, the name of Mary Anne has not been mentioned, but the twins will out. Nothing can keep down the twins.

"It's a very extraordinary thing, Saunders," says Mr. Whiffler to the visitor, "but you have seen our little babies, the—the twins?"

The friend's heart sinks within him as he answers, "Oh, yes, often."

"Your talking of the pyramids," says Mr. Whiffler, quite as a matter of course, "reminds me of the twins. It's a very extraordinary thing about those babies. What colour should you say their eyes were?"

"Upon my word," the friend stammers, "I hardly know how to answer;" the fact being that, except as the friend does not remember to have heard of any departure from the ordinary course of nature in the instance of these twins, they might have no eyes at all for aught he has observed to the contrary.

"You wouldn't say they were red, I suppose?" says Mr. Whiffler.

The friend hesitates, and rather thinks they are; but, inferring from the expression of Mr. Whiffler's face that red is not the colour, smiles with some confidence, and says, "No, no; very different from that."

"What should you say to blue?" says Mr. Whiffler.

The friend glances at him, and, observing a different expression in his face, ventures to say, "I should say they *were* blue—a decided blue."

"To be sure," cries Mr. Whiffler, triumphantly; "I knew you would. But what should you say if I was to tell you that the boy's eyes are blue and the girl's hazel, eh?"

"Impossible!" exclaims the friend, not at all knowing why it should be impossible.

"A fact, notwithstanding," cries Mr. Whiffler; "and let me tell you, Saunders, *that's* not a common thing in twins, or a circumstance that will happen every day."

In this dialogue Mrs. Whiffler, as being deeply responsible for the twins, their charms and singularities, has taken no share; but now she relates, in broken English, a witticism of little Dick's bearing upon the subject just discussed, which delights Mr. Whiffler beyond measure, and causes him to declare that he would have sworn that was Dick's if he had heard it anywhere. Then he requests that Mrs. Whiffler will tell Saunders what Tom said about mad bulls; and, Mrs. Whiffler relating the anecdote, a discussion ensues upon the different character of Tom's wit and Dick's wit, from which it appears that Dick's humour is of a lively turn, while Tom's style is the dry and caustic. This discussion, being enlivened by various illustrations, lasts a long time, and is only stopped by Mrs. Whiffler instructing the footman to ring the nursery bell, as the children were promised that they should come down and taste the pudding.

The friend turns pale when this order is given, and paler still when it is followed up by a great pattering on the staircase (not unlike the sound of rain upon a skylight), a violent bursting open of the dining-room door, and the tumultuous appearance of six small children, closely succeeded by a strong nursery-maid with a twin in each arm. As the whole eight are screaming, shouting, or kicking—some influenced by a ravenous appetite, some by a horror of the stranger, and some by a conflict of the two feelings—a pretty long space elapses before all their heads can be ranged round the table and anything like order restored; in bringing about which happy state of things both the nurse and footman are severely scratched. At length Mrs. Whiffler is heard to say, "Mr. Saunders, shall I give you some pudding?" A breathless silence ensues, and sixteen small eyes are fixed upon the guest in expectation of his reply. A wild shout of joy proclaims that he has said, "No, thank you." Spoons are waved in the air, legs appear above the tablecloth in uncontrollable ecstacy, and eighty short fingers dabble in damson syrup.

While the pudding is being disposed of, Mr. and Mrs. Whiffler look on with beaming countenances, and Mr. Whiffler, nudging his friend Saunders, begs him to take notice of Tom's eyes, or Dick's chin, or Ned's nose, or Mary Anne's hair, or Emily's figure, or little Bob's calves, or Fanny's mouth, or Carry's head, as the case may be. Whatever the attention of Mr. Saunders is called to, Mr. Saunders admires, of course; though he is rather confused about the sex of the youngest branches, and looks at the wrong children, turning to a girl when Mr. Whiffler directs his attention to a boy, and falling into raptures with a boy when he ought to be enchanted with a girl. Then the dessert comes, and there is a vast deal of scrambling after fruit, and sudden spirting forth of juice out of tight oranges into infant eyes, and much screeching and wailing in consequence. At length it becomes time for Mrs. Whiffler to retire, and all the children are by force of arms compelled to kiss and love Mr. Saunders before going upstairs, except Tom, who, lying on his back in the hall, proclaims that Mr. Saunders "is a naughty beast;" and Dick, who having drunk his father's wine when he was looking another way, is found to be intoxicated, and is carried out, very limp and helpless.

Mr. Whiffler and his friend are left alone together, but Mr. Whiffler's thoughts are still with his family, if his family are not with him.

"Saunders," says he, after a short silence, "if you please, we 'll drink Mrs. Whiffler and the children."

Mr. Saunders feels this to be a reproach against himself for not proposing the same sentiment, and drinks it in some confusion.

"Ah!" Mr. Whiffler sighs, "these children, Saunders, make one quite an old man."

Mr. Saunders thinks that if they were his, they would make him a very old man; but he says nothing.

"And yet," pursues Mr. Whiffler, "what can equal domestic happiness? What can

equal the engaging ways of children? Saunders, why don't *you* get married?"

Now, this is an embarrassing question, because Mr. Saunders has been thinking that if he had at any time entertained matrimonial designs, the revelation of that day would surely have routed them for ever.

"I am glad, however," says Mr. Whiffler, "that you *are* a bachelor; glad on one account, Saunders—a selfish one, I admit. Will you do Mrs. Whiffler and myself a favour?"

Mr. Saunders is surprised, evidently surprised; but he replies, "with the greatest pleasure."

"Then, will you, Saunders," says Mr. Whiffler, in an impressive manner, "will you cement and consolidate our friendship by coming into the family (so to speak) as a godfather?"

"I shall be proud and delighted," replies Mr. Saunders. "Which of the children is it? Really, I thought they were all christened, or——"

"Saunders," Mr. Whiffler interposes, "they *are* all christened; you are right. The fact is, that Mrs. Whiffler is—in short, we expect another."

"Not a ninth!" cries the friend, all aghast at the idea.

"Yes, Saunders," rejoins Mr. Whiffler, solemnly, "a ninth. Did we drink Mrs. Whiffler's health? Let us drink it again, Saunders, and wish her well over it."

Doctor Johnson used to tell a story of a man who had but one idea, which was a wrong one. The couple who dote on their children are in the same predicament: at home or abroad, at all times and in all places, their thoughts are bound up in this one subject, and have no sphere beyond. They relate the clever things their offspring say or do, and weary every company with their prolixity and absurdity. Mr. Whiffler takes a friend by the button at a street corner on a windy day, to tell him a *bon mot* of his youngest boy's; and Mrs. Whiffler, calling to see a sick acquaintance, entertains her with a cheerful account of all her own past sufferings and present expectations. In such cases, the sins of the fathers indeed descend upon the children, for people soon come to regard them as predestined little bores. The couple who dote upon their children cannot be said to be actuated by a general love for these engaging little people (which would be a great excuse), for they are apt to underrate and entertain a jealousy of any children but their own. If they examined their own hearts, they would, perhaps, find at the bottom of all this more self-love and egotism than they think of. Self-love and egotism are bad qualities, of which the unrestrained exhibition, though it may be sometimes amusing, never fails to be wearisome and unpleasant. Couples who dote upon their children, therefore, are best avoided.

THE COOL COUPLE.

THERE is an old-fashioned weather-glass representing a house with two doorways, in one of which is the figure of a gentleman, in the other the figure of a lady. When the weather is to be fine, the lady comes out and the gentleman goes in; when wet, the gentleman comes out and the lady goes in. They never seek each other's society, are never elevated and depressed by the same cause, and have nothing in common. They are the model of a cool couple, except that there is something of politeness and consideration about the behaviour of the gentleman in the weather-glass, in which neither of the cool couple can be said to participate.

The cool couple are seldom alone together, and when they are, nothing can exceed their apathy and dulness, the gentleman being for the most part drowsy, and the lady silent. If they enter into conversation, it is usually of an ironical or recriminatory nature. Thus, when the gentleman has indulged in a very long yawn and settled himself more snugly in his easy chair, the lady will perhaps remark, "Well, I am sure, Charles! I hope you're comfortable."

To which the gentleman replies, "Oh, yes, he's quite comfortable—quite."

"There are not many married men, I hope," returns the lady, "who seek comfort in such selfish gratifications as you do."

"Nor many wives who seek comfort in such selfish gratifications as *you* do, I hope," retorts the gentleman.

"Whose fault is that?" demands the lady.

The gentleman becoming more sleepy, returns no answer.

"Whose fault is it?" the lady repeats.

The gentleman still returning no answer, she goes on to say that she believes there never was in all this world anybody so attached to her home, so thoroughly domestic, so unwilling

to seek a moment's gratification or pleasure beyond her own fireside as she. God knows that before she was married she never thought or dreamt of such a thing; and she remembers that her poor papa used to say again and again, almost every day of his life, "Oh, my dear Louisa, if you only marry a man who understands you, and takes the trouble to consider your happiness and accommodate himself a very little to your disposition, what a treasure he will find in you!" She supposes her papa knew what her disposition was—he had known her long enough—he ought to have been acquainted with it, but, what can she do? If her home is always dull and lonely, and her husband is always absent and finds no pleasure in her society, she is naturally sometimes driven (seldom enough, she is sure) to seek a little recreation elsewhere; she is not expected to pine and mope to death she hopes.

"Then come, Louisa," says the gentleman, waking up as suddenly as he fell asleep; "stop at home this evening, and so will I."

"I should be sorry to suppose, Charles, that you took a pleasure in aggravating me," replies the lady; "but you know as well as I do that I am particularly engaged to Mrs. Mortimer, and that it would be an act of the grossest rudeness and ill-breeding, after accepting a seat in her box and preventing her from inviting anybody else, not to go."

"Ah, there it is," says the gentleman, shrugging his shoulders, "I knew that perfectly well. I knew you couldn't devote an evening to your own home. Now, all I have to say, Louisa, is this: recollect that *I* was quite willing to stay at home, and that it 's no fault of *mine* we are not oftener together."

With that the gentleman goes away to keep an old appointment at his club, and the lady hurries off to dress for Mrs. Mortimer's; and neither thinks of the other, until by some odd chance they find themselves alone again.

But it must not be supposed that the cool couple are habitually a quarrelsome one; quite the contrary. These differences are only occasions for a little self-excuse,—nothing more. In general they are as easy and careless, and dispute as seldom, as any common acquaintances may; for it is neither worth their while to put each other out of the way nor to ruffle themselves.

When they meet in society, the cool couple are the best-bred people in existence. The lady is seated in a corner among a little knot of lady friends, one of whom exclaims, "Why, I vow and declare there is your husband, my dear!"

"Whose? mine?" she says, carelessly.

"Ay, yours, and coming this way too."

"How very odd!" says the lady, in a languid tone; "I thought he had been at Dover."

The gentleman coming up, and speaking to all the other ladies and nodding slightly to his wife, it turns out that he has been to Dover, and has just now returned.

"What a strange creature you are!" cries the wife; "and what on earth brought you here, I wonder?"

"I came to look after you, *of course*," rejoins her husband.

This is so pleasant a jest that the lady is mightily amused, as are all the other ladies similarly situated who are within hearing; and while they are enjoying it to the full, the gentleman nods again, turns upon his heel, and saunters away.

There are times, however, when his company is not so agreeable, though equally unexpected; such as when the lady has invited one or two particular friends to tea and scandal, and he happens to come home in the very midst of their diversion. It is a hundred chances to one that he remains in the house half an hour, but the lady is rather disturbed by the intrusion, notwithstanding, and reasons within herself,—

"I am sure I never interfere with him, and why should he interfere with me? It can scarcely be accidental: it never happens that I have a particular reason for not wishing him to come home, but he always comes. It 's very provoking and tiresome; and I am sure when he leaves me so much alone for his own pleasure, the least he could do would be to do as much for mine."

Observing what passes in her mind, the gentleman who has come home for his own accommodation makes a merit of it with himself; arrives at the conclusion that it is the very last place in which he can hope to be comfortable; and determines, as he takes up his hat and cane, never to be so virtuous again.

Thus a great many cool couples go on until they are cold couples, and the grave has closed over their folly and indifference. Loss of name, station, character, life itself, has ensued from causes as slight as these, before now; and when gossips tell such tales, and aggravate their deformities, they elevate their hands and eyebrows, and call each other to witness what a cool couple Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so always were, even in the best of times.

THE PLAUSIBLE COUPLE.

THE plausible couple have many titles. They are "a delightful couple," an "affectionate couple," "a most agreeable couple," "a good-hearted couple," and "the best-natured couple in existence." The truth is, that the plausible couple are people of the world; and either the way of pleasing the world has grown much easier than it was in the days of the old man and his ass, or the old man was but a bad hand at it, and knew very little of the trade.

"But is it really possible to please the world?" says some doubting reader. It is indeed. Nay, it is not only very possible, but very easy. The ways are crooked, and sometimes foul and low. What then? A man need but crawl upon his hands and knees, know when to close his eyes and when his ears, when to stoop and when to stand upright; and if by the world is meant that atom of it in which he moves himself, he shall please it, never fear.

Now, it will be readily seen that if a plausible man or woman have an easy means of pleasing the world by an adaptation of self to all its twistings and twinings, a plausible man *and* woman, or, in other words, a plausible couple, playing into each other's hands, and acting in concert, have a manifest advantage. Hence it is that plausible couples scarcely ever fail of success on a pretty large scale; and hence it is that if the reader, laying down this unwieldy volume at the next full stop, will have the goodness to review his or her circle of acquaintance, and to search particularly for some man and wife with a large connexion and a good name, not easily referable to their abilities or their wealth, he or she (that is, the male or female reader) will certainly find that gentleman or lady, on a very short reflection, to be a plausible couple.

The plausible couple are the most ecstatic people living; the most sensitive people to merit on the face of the earth. Nothing clever or virtuous escapes them. They have miscroscopic eyes for such endowments, and can find them anywhere. The plausible couple never favour—oh, no! They don't even scruple to tell their friends of their faults. One is too generous, another too candid; a third has a tendency to think all people like himself, and to regard mankind as a company of angels; a fourth is kind hearted to a fault.

"We never flatter, my dear Mrs. Jackson," say the plausible couple; "we speak our minds. Neither you nor Mr. Jackson have faults enough. It may sound strangely, but it is true. You have not faults enough. You know our way,—we must speak out, and always do. Quarrel with us for saying so, if you will; but we repeat it: you have not faults enough!"

The plausible couple are no less plausible to each other than to third parties. They are always loving and harmonious. The plausible gentleman calls his wife "darling," and the plausible lady addresses him as "dearest." If it be Mr. and Mrs. Bobtail Widger, Mrs. Widger is "Lavinia, darling," and Mr. Widger is "Bobtail, dearest." Speaking of each other, they observe the same tender form. Mrs. Widger relates what "Bobtail" said, and Mr. Widger recounts what "darling" thought and did.

If you sit next to the plausible lady at a dinner-table, she takes the earliest opportunity of expressing her belief that you are acquainted with the Clickits; she is sure she has heard the Clickits speak of you; she must not tell you in what terms, or you will take her for a flatterer. You admit a knowledge of the Clickits; the plausible lady immediately launches out in their praise. She quite loves the Clickits. Were there ever such true-hearted, hospitable, excellent people? such a gentle, interesting little woman as Mrs. Clickit, or such a frank, unaffectep creature as Mr. Clickit? were there ever two people, in short, so little spoiled by the world as they are?

"As who, darling?" cries Mr. Widger, from the opposite side of the table.

"The Clickits, dearest," says Mrs. Widger.

"Indeed you are right, darling," Mr. Widger rejoins; "the Clickits are a very high-minded, worthy, estimable couple."

Mrs. Widger remarking that Bobtail always grows quite eloquent upon this subject, Mr. Widger admits that he feels very strongly whenever such people as the Clickits and some other friends of his (here he glances at the host and hostess) are mentioned, for they are an honour to human nature, and do one good to think of.

"*You* know the Clickits, Mrs. Jackson?" he says, addressing the lady of the house.

"No, indeed; we have not that pleasure," she replies.

"You astonish me!" exclaims Mr. Widger: "not know the Clickits! why, you are the very people of all others who ought to be their bosom friends. You are kindred beings; you are one and the same thing. Not know the Clickits! Now, *will* you know the Clickits? Will you make a point of knowing them? Will you meet them in a friendly way at our house one evening, and be acquainted with them?"

Mrs. Jackson will be delighted; nothing would give her more pleasure.

"Then, Lavinia, my darling," says Mr. Widger, "mind you don't lose sight of that; now pray take care that Mr. and Mrs. Jackson know the Clickits without loss of time. Such people ought not to be strangers to each other."

Mrs. Widger books both families as the centre of attraction for her next party, and Mr. Widger going on to expatiate upon the virtues of the Clickits, adds to their other moral qualities that they keep one of the neatest phaetons in town, and have two thousand a year.

As the plausible couple never laud the merits of any absent person without dexterously contriving that their praises shall reflect upon somebody who is present, so they never depreciate anything or anybody without turning their depreciation to the same account. Their friend, Mr. Slummery, say they, is unquestionably a clever painter, and would no doubt be very popular, and sell his pictures at a very high price, if that cruel Mr. Frithers had not forestalled him in his department of art, and made it thoroughly and completely his own. (Frithers, it is to be observed, being present and within hearing, and Slummery elsewhere).

Is Mrs. Tabblewick really as beautiful as people say? Why, there indeed you ask them a very puzzling question, because there is no doubt that she is a very charming woman, and they have long known her intimately. She is no doubt beautiful, very beautiful; they once thought her the most beautiful woman ever seen; still, if you press them for an honest answer, they are bound to say that this was before they had ever seen our lovely friend on the sofa (the sofa is hard by, and our lovely friend can't help hearing the whispers in which this is said); since that time, perhaps, they have been hardly fair judges; Mrs. Tabblewick is no doubt extremely handsome—very like our friend, in fact, in the form of features; but in point of expression, and soul, and figure, and air altogether—oh, dear!

But while the plausible couple depreciate, they are still careful to preserve their character for amiability and kind feeling; indeed, the depreciation itself is often made to grow out of their excessive sympathy and goodwill. The plausible lady calls on a lady who dotes upon her children, and is sitting with a little girl upon her knee, enraptured by her artless replies, and protesting that there is nothing she delights in so much as conversing with these fairies; when the other lady inquires if she has seen young Mrs. Finching lately, and whether the baby has turned out a finer one than it promised to be.

"Oh, dear!" cries the plausible lady, "you cannot think how often Bobtail and I have talked about poor Mrs. Finching—she is such a dear soul, and was so anxious that the baby should be a fine child—and very naturally, because she was very much here at one time, and there is, you know, a natural emulation among mothers, that it is impossible to tell you how much we have felt for her."

"Is it weak or plain, or what?" inquires the other.

"Weak or plain, my love," returns the plausible lady; "it's a fright—a perfect little fright. You never saw such a miserable creature in all your days. Positively, you must not let her see one of these beautiful dears again, or you'll break her heart, you will, indeed. Heaven bless this child! see how she is looking in my face. Can you conceive anything prettier than that? If poor Mrs. Finching could only hope—but that's impossible—and the gifts of Providence, you know—what *did* I do with my pocket-handkerchief?"

What prompts the mother, who dotes upon her children, to comment to her lord that evening on the plausible lady's engaging qualities and feeling heart? And what is it that procures Mr. and Mrs. Bobtail Widger an immediate invitation to dinner?

THE NICE LITTLE COUPLE.

A CUSTOM once prevailed in old-fashioned circles that when a lady or gentleman was unable to sing a song, he or she should enliven the company with a story. As we find ourself in the predicament of not being able to describe (to our own satisfaction) nice little couples in the abstract, we purpose telling, in this place, a little story about a nice little couple of our acquaintance.

Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup are the nice little couple in question. Mr. Chirrup has the smartness, and something of the brisk quick manner, of a small bird. Mrs. Chirrup is the prettiest of all little women, and has the prettiest little figure conceivable. She has the neatest little foot, and the softest little voice, and the pleasantest little smile, and the tidiest little curls, and the brightest little eyes, and the quietest little manner, and is, in short, altogether one of the most engaging of all little women, dead

or alive. She is a condensation of all the domestic virtues; a pocket edition of the Young Man's Best Companion; a little woman at a very high pressure, with an amazing quantity of goodness and usefulness in an exceedingly small space. Little as she is, Mrs. Chirrup might furnish forth matter for the moral equipment of a score of housewives six feet high in their stockings, if, in the presence of ladies, we may be allowed the expression of corresponding robustness.

Nobody knows all this better than Mr. Chirrup, though he rather takes on that he don't. Accordingly, he is very proud of his better half, and evidently considers himself, as all other people consider him, rather fortunate in having her to wife. We say evidently, because Mr. Chirrup is a warm-hearted little fellow, and if you catch his eye when he has been slyly glancing at Mrs. Chirrup in company, there is a certain complacent twinkle in it, accompanied perhaps by a half-expressed toss of the head, which as clearly indicates what has been passing in his mind as if he had put it into words, and shouted it out through a speaking-trumpet. Moreover, Mr. Chirrup has a particularly mild and bird-like manner of calling Mrs. Chirrup "my dear," and—for he is of a jocose turn—of cutting little witticisms upon her, and making her the subject of various harmless pleasantries, which nobody enjoys more thoroughly than Mrs. Chirrup herself. Mr. Chirrup, too, now and then affects to deplore his bachelor days, and to bemoan (with a marvellously contented and smirking face) the loss of his freedom and the sorrow of his heart at having been taken captive by Mrs. Chirrup—all of which circumstances combine to show the secret triumph and satisfaction of Mr. Chirrup's soul.

We have already had occasion to observe that Mrs. Chirrup is an incomparable housewife. In all the arts of domestic arrangement and management, in all the mysteries of confectionery-making, pickling, and preserving, there never was such a thorough adept as that nice little body. She is, besides, a cunning worker in muslin and fine linen, and a special hand at marketing to the very best advantage. But if there be one branch of housekeeping in which she excel to an utterly unparalleled and unprecedented extent, it is in the important one of carving. A roast goose is universally allowed to be the great stumbling-block in the way of young aspirants to perfection in this department of science; many promising carvers, beginning with legs of mutton, and preserving a good reputation through fillets of veal, sirloins of beef, quarters of lamb, fowls, and even ducks, have sunk before a roast goose, and lost caste and character for ever. To Mrs. Chirrup the resolving a goose into its smallest component parts is a pleasant pastime, a practical joke, a thing to be done in a minute or so, without the smallest interruption of the conversation of the time. No handing the dish over to an unfortunate man upon her right or left, no wild sharpening of the knife, no hacking and sawing at an unruly joint, no noise, no splash, no heat, no leaving off in despair; all is confidence and cheerfulness. The dish is set upon the table, the cover removed; for an instant, and only an instant, you observe that Mrs. Chirrup's attention is distracted; she smiles, but heareth not. You proceed with your story; meanwhile the glittering knife is slowly upraised; both Mrs. Chirrup's wrists are slightly, but not ungracefully, agitated; she compresses her lips for an instant, then breaks into a smile, and all is over. The legs of the bird slide gently down into a pool of gravy, the wings seem to melt from the body, the breast separates into a row of juicy slices, the smaller and more complicated parts of his anatomy are perfectly developed, a cavern of stuffing is revealed, and the goose is gone.

To dine with Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup is one of the pleasantest things in the world. Mr. Chirrup has a bachelor friend who lived with him in his own days of single blessedness, and to whom he is mightily attached. Contrary to the usual custom, this bachelor friend is no less a friend of Mrs. Chirrup's, and, consequently, whenever you dine with Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup, you meet the bachelor friend. It would put any reasonably-conditioned mortal into good humour to observe the entire unanimity which subsists between these three; but there is a quiet welcome dimpling in Mrs. Chirrup's face, a bustling hospitality oozing as it were out of the waistcoat-pockets of Mr. Chirrup, and a patronizing enjoyment of their cordiality and satisfaction on the part of the bachelor friend, which is quite delightful. On these occasions Mr. Chirrup usually takes an opportunity of rallying the friend on being single, and the friend retorts upon Mr. Chirrup for being married, at which moments some single young ladies present are like to die of laughter; and we have more than once observed them bestow looks upon the friend, which convinces us that his position is by no means a safe one, as, indeed, we hold no bachelor's to be who visits married friends and crack jokes on wedlock; for certain it is that such men walk among traps, and nets, and pitfalls innumerable, and often find themselves down upon their knees at the altar-rails, taking M. or N. for their wedded wives, before they knew anything about the matter.

However, this is no business of Mr. Chirrup's, who talks, and laughs, and drinks his wine, and laughs again, and talks more, until it is time to repair to the drawing-room, where, coffee served and over, Mrs. Chirrup prepares for a round game, by sorting the nicest possible little fish into the nicest possible little pools, and calling Mr. Chirrup to assist her, which Mr. Chirrup does. As they stand side

by side, you find that Mr. Chirrup is the least possible shadow of a shade taller than Mrs. Chirrup, and that they are the neatest and best matched little couple that can be, which the chances are ten to one against your observing with such effect at any other time, unless you see them in the street arm-in-arm, or meet them some rainy day trotting along under a very small umbrella.

The round game (at which Mrs. Chirrup is the merriest of the party) being done and over, in course of time a nice little tray appears, on which is a nice little supper, and when that is finished likewise, and you have said good night, you find yourself repeating a dozen times as you ride home, that there never was such a nice little couple as Mr. and Mrs. Chirrup.

Whether it is that pleasant qualities, being packed more closely in small bodies than in large, come more readily to hand than when they are diffused over a wider space, and have to be gathered together for use, we don't know; but as a general rule—strengthened like all other rules by experience—we hold that little people are sprightly and good-natured. The more sprightly and good-natured people we have, the better; therefore, let us wish well to all nice little couples, and hope that they may increase and multiply.

THE EGOTISTICAL COUPLE.

EGOTISM in couples is of two kinds. It is our purpose to show this by two examples.

The egotistical couple may be young, old, middle-aged, well to do, or ill to do; they may have a small family, a large family, or no family at all. There is no outward sign by which an egotistical couple may be known and avoided. They come upon you unawares, there is no guarding against them. No man can of himself be forewarned or forearmed against an egotistical couple.

The egotistical couple have undergone every calamity and experienced every pleasurable and painful sensation of which our nature is susceptible. You cannot by possibility tell the egotistical couple anything they don't know, or describe to them anything they have not felt. They have been everything but dead. Sometimes we are tempted to wish they had been even that, but only in our uncharitable moments, which are few and far between.

We happened the other day, in the course of a morning call, to encounter an egotistical couple, nor were we suffered to remain long in ignorance of the fact, for our very first inquiry of the lady of the house brought them into active and vigorous operation. The inquiry was, of course, touching the lady's health, and the answer happened to be that she had not been very well.

"Oh, my dear," said the egotistical lady, "don't talk of not being well. We have been in *such* a state since we saw you last."

The lady of the house happening to remark that her lord had not been well either, the egotistical gentleman struck in,—

"Never let Briggs complain of not being well—never let Briggs complain, my dear Mrs. Briggs, after what I have undergone within these six weeks. He doesn't know what it is to be ill; he hasn't the least idea of it—not the faintest conception."

"My dear," interposed his wife, smiling, "you talk as if it were almost a crime in Mr. Briggs not to have been ill as we have been, instead of feeling thankful to Providence that both he and our dear Mrs. Briggs are in such blissful ignorance of real suffering."

"My love," returned the egotistical gentleman, in a low and pious voice, "you mistake me. I feel grateful—very grateful. I trust our friends may never purchase their experience as dearly as we have bought ours. I hope they never may."

Having put down Mrs. Briggs upon this theme, and settled the question thus, the egotistical gentleman turned to us, and, after a few preliminary remarks, all tending towards and leading up to the point he had in his mind, inquired if we happened to be acquainted with the Dowager Lady Snorflerer. On our replying in the negative, he presumed we had often met Lord Slang, or beyond all doubt that we were on intimate terms with Sir Chipkins Glogwog. Finding that we were equally unable to lay claim to either of these distinctions, he expressed great astonishment, and turning to his wife with a retrospective smile, inquired who it was that told that capital story about the mashed potatoes.

"Who, my dear?" returned the egotistical lady.

"Why, Sir Chipkins, of course. How can you ask? Don't you remember his applying it to our cook, and saying that you and I were so like the Prince and Princess, that he could almost have sworn we were they?"

"To be sure, I remember that," said the egotistical gentleman; "but are you quite certain that didn't apply to the other anecdote about the Emperor of Austria and the pump?"

"Upon my word, then, I think it did," replied his wife.

"To be sure it did," said the egotistical gentleman; "it was Slang's story. I remember it now perfectly."

However, it turned out a few seconds afterwards that the egotistical gentleman's memory was rather treacherous, as he began to have a misgiving that the story had been told by the Dowager Lady Snorflerer the very last time they dined there; but there appearing, on further consideration, strong circumstantial evidence tending to show that this couldn't be, inasmuch as the Dowager Lady Snorflerer had been, on the occasion in question, wholly engrossed by the egotistical lady, the egotistical gentleman recanted this opinion; and, after laying the story at the doors of a great many great people, happily left it at last with the Duke of Scuttlewig, observing that it was not extraordinary he had forgotten his Grace hitherto, as it oftened happened that the names of those with whom we were upon the most familiar footing were the very last to present themselves to our thoughts.

It not only appeared that the egotistical couple knew everybody, but that scarcely any event of importance or notoriety had occurred for many years with which they had not been in some way or other connected. Thus we learned that when the well-known attempt upon the life of George III. was made by Hatfield, in Drury Lane Threatre, the egotistical gentleman's grandfather sat upon his right hand, and was the first man who collared him; and that the egotistical lady's aunt, sitting within a few boxes of the royal party, was the only person in the audience who heard his majesty exclaim, "Charlotte, Charlotte, don't be frightened! they're letting off squibs—they're letting off squibs."

When the fire broke out, which ended in the destruction of the two Houses of Parliament, the egotistical couple, being at the time at a drawing-room window on Blackheath, then and there simultaneously exclaimed, to the astonishment of the whole party, "It's the House of Lords." Nor was this a solitary instance of their peculiar discernment, for chancing to be (as by a comparison of dates and circumstances they afterwards found) in the same omnibus as Mr. Greenacre, when he carried his victim's head about town in a blue bag, they both remarked a singular twitching in the muscles of his countenance; and walking down Fish Street Hill a few weeks since, the egotistical gentleman said to his lady, slightly casting up his eyes to the top of the monument, "There's a boy up there, my dear, reading a Bible. It's very strange. I don't like it. In five seconds afterwards, sir, says the egotistical gentlemen, bringing his hands together with one violent clap, "the lad was over!"

Diversifying these topics by the introduction of many others of the same kind, and entertaining us between whiles with a minute account of what weather and diet disagreed with them, and at what time they usually got up, and at what time they went to bed, with many other particulars of their domestic economy too numerous to mention, the egotistical couple at length took their leave, and afforded us an opportunity of doing the same.

Mr. and Mrs. Sliverstone are an egotistical couple of another class, for all the lady's egotism is about her husband, and all the gentleman's about his wife. For example:—Mr. Sliverstone is a clerical gentleman, and occasionally writes sermons, as clerical gentlemen do. If you happen to obtain admission at the street door while he is so engaged, Mrs. Sliverston appears on tiptoe, and, speaking in a solemn whisper as if there were at least three or four particular friends upstairs, all upon the point of death, implores you to be very silent, for Mr. Sliverstone is composing, and she need not say how very important it is that he should not be disturbed. Unwilling to interrupt anything so serious, you hasten to withdraw with many apologies; but this Mrs. Sliverstone will by no means allow, observing that she knows you would like to see him, as it is very natural you should, and that she is determined to make a trial for you, as you are a great favourite. So you are led upstairs—still on tiptoe—to the door of a little back room, in which, as the lady imforms you in a whisper, Mr. Sliverstone always writes.

No answer being returned to a couple of soft taps, the lady opens the door, and there, sure enough, is Mr. Sliverstone, with dishevelled hair, powdering away with pen, ink and paper, at a rate which, if he has any powers of sustaining it, would settle the longest sermon in no time. At first he is too much absorbed to be roused by this intrusion; but presently looking up, says faintly, "Ah!" and pointing to his desk with a weary and languid smile, extends his hand, and hopes you 'll forgive him. Then Mrs. Sliverstone sits down beside him, and taking his hand in hers, tells you how Mr. Sliverstone has been shut up there ever since nine o'clock this morning (it is by this time twelve at noon), and how she knows it cannot be good for his health, and is very uneasy about it. Unto this Mr. Sliverstone replies firmly, that "It must be done;" which agonizes Mrs. Sliverstone still more, and she goes on to tell you that such were Mr. Sliverstone's labours last week—what with the buryings, marryings, churchings, christenings, and all together—that when he was going up the pulpit stairs on Sunday evening, he was obliged

to hold on the rails, or he would certainly have fallen over into his pew. Mr. Sliverstone, who has been listening and smiling meekly, says, "Not quite so bad as that, not quite so bad!" He admits, though, on cross-examination, that he *was* very near falling upon the verger, who was following him up to bolt the door; but adds, that it was his duty as a Christian to fall upon him, if need were, and that he, Mr. Sliverstone (and possibly the verger too) ought to glory in it.

This sentence communicates new impulses to Mrs. Sliverstone, who launches into new praises of Mr. Sliverstone's worth and excellence, to which he listens in the same meek silence, save when he puts in a word of self-denial relative to some question of fact, as—"Not seventy-two christenings that week, my dear. Only seventy-one, only seventy-one." At length his lady has quite concluded, and then he says, "Why should he repine, why should he give way, why should he suffer his heart to sink within him? Is it he alone who toils and suffers? What has she gone through, he should like to know? What does she go through every day for him and for society?"

With such an exordium Mr. Sliverstone launches out into glowing praises of the conduct of Mrs. Sliverstone in the production of eight young children, and the subsequent rearing and fostering of the same; and thus the husband magnifies the wife, and the wife the husband.

This would be well enough if Mr. and Mrs. Sliverstone kept it to themselves, or even to themselves and a friend or two; but they do not. The more hearers they have, the more egotistical the couple become, and the more anxious they are to make believers in their merits.

Perhaps this is the worst kind of egotism. It has not even the poor excuse of being spontaneous, but is the result of a deliberate system of malice aforethought. Mere empty-headed conceit excites our pity, but ostentatious hypocrisy awakens our disgust.

THE COUPLE WHO CODDLE THEMSELVES.

MRS. MERRYWINKLE'S maiden name was Chopper. She was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Chopper. Her father died when she was, as the play-books express it, "yet an infant;" and so old Mrs. Chopper, when her daughter married, made the house of her son-in-law her home from that time henceforth, and set up her staff of rest with Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle.

Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle are a couple who coddle themselves, and the venerable Mrs. Chopper is an aider and abettor in the same.

Mr. Merrywinkle is a rather lean and long-necked gentleman, middle-aged and middle-sized, and usually troubled with a cold in his head. Mrs. Merrywinkle is a delicate looking lady, with very light hair, and is exceedingly subject to the same unpleasant disorder. The venerable Mrs. Chopper—who is strictly entitled to the appellation, her daughter not being very young, otherwise than by courtesy, at the time of her marriage, which was some years ago—is a mysterious old lady who lurks behind a pair of spectacles, and is afflicted with a chronic disease, respecting which she has taken a vast deal of medical advice, and referred to a vast number of medical books, without meeting any definition of symptoms that at all suits her, or enables her to say, "That's my complaint." Indeed, the absence of authentic information upon the subject of this complaint would seem to be Mrs. Chopper's greatest ill, as in all other respects she is an uncommonly hale and hearty gentlewoman.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle wear an extraordinary quantity of flannel, and have a habit of putting their feet in hot water to an unnatural extent. They likewise indulge in camomile-tea and suchlike compounds, and rub themselves on the slightest provocation with camphorated spirits and other lotions applicable to mumps, sore throats, rheumatism, or lumbago.

Mr. Merrywinkle's leaving home to go to business on a damp or wet morning is a very elaborate affair. He puts on wash-leather socks over his stockings, and India-rubber shoes above his boots, and wears under his waistcoat a cuirass of hare-skin. Besides these precautions, he winds a thick shawl round his throat, and blocks up his mouth with a large silk handkerchief. Thus accoutred, and furnished besides with a great coat and umbrella, he braves the dangers of the streets; travelling in severe weather at a gentle trot, the better to preserve the circulation, and bringing his mouth to the surface to take breath, but very seldom, and with the utmost caution. His office door opened, he shoots past his clerk at the same pace, and diving into his own private room,

closes the door, examines the window fastenings, and gradually unrobes himself, hanging his pocket-handkerchief on the fender to air, and determining to write to the newspapers about the fog, which, he says, "has really got to that pitch that it is quite unbearable."

In this last opinion Mrs. Merrywinkle and her respected mother fully concur; for, though not present, their thoughts and tongues are occupied with the same subject, which is their constant theme all day. If anybody happens to call, Mrs. Merrywinkle opines that they must assuredly be mad, and her first salutation is "Why, what in the name of goodness can bring you out in such weather? You know you *must* catch your death." This assurance is corroborated by Mrs. Chopper, who adds, in further confirmation, a dismal legend concerning an individual of her acquaintance, who, making a call under precisely parallel circumstances, and being then in the best of health and spirits, expired in forty-eight hours afterwards, of a complication of inflammatory disorders. The visitor, rendered not altogether comfortable, perhaps, by this and other precedents, inquires very affectionately after Mr. Merrywinkle, but by so doing brings about no change of the subject; for Mr. Merrywinkle's name is inseparably connected with his complaints, and his complaints are inseparably connected with Mrs. Merrywinkle's; and when these are done with, Mrs. Chopper, who has been biding her time, cuts in with the chronic disorder — a subject upon which the amiable old lady never leaves off speaking until she is left alone and very often not then.

But Mr. Merrywinkle comes home to dinner. He is received by Mrs. Merrywinkle and Mrs. Chopper, who, on his remarking that he thinks his feet are damp, turn pale as ashes and drag him upstairs, imploring him to have them rubbed directly with a dry coarse towel. Rubbed they are, one by Mrs. Merrywinkle and one by Mrs. Chopper, until the friction causes Mr. Merrywinkle to make horrible faces, and look as if he had been smelling very powerful onions, when they desist, and the patient, provided for his better security with thick worsted stockings and list slippers, is borne downstairs to dinner. Now, the dinner is always a good one, the appetites of the diners being delicate, and requiring a little of what Mrs. Merrywinkle calls "tittivation," the secret of which is understood to lie in good cookery and tasteful spices, and which process is so successfully performed in the present instance, that both Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle eat a remarkably good dinner, and even the afflicted Mrs. Chopper wields her knife and fork with much of the spirit and elasticity of youth. But Mr. Merrywinkle, in his desire to gratify his appetite, is not unmindful of his health, for he has a bottle of carbonate of soda with which to qualify his porter, and a little pair of scales in which to weigh it out. Neither in his anxiety to take care of his body is he unmindful of the welfare of his immortal part, as he always prays that for what he is going to receive he may be made truly thankful, and in order that he may be as thankful as possible, eats and drinks to the utmost.

Either from eating and drinking so much, or from being the victim of this constitutional infirmity, among others, Mr. Merrywinkle, after two or three glasses of wine, falls fast asleep; and he has scarcely closed his eyes, when Mrs. Merrywinkle and Mrs. Chopper fall asleep likewise. It is on awakening at tea-time that their most alarming symptoms prevail; for then Mr. Merrywinkle feels as if his temples were tightly bound round with the chain of the street door, and Mrs. Merrywinkle as if she had made a hearty dinner of half-hundredweights, and Mrs. Chopper as if cold water were running down her back, and oyster-knives with sharp points were plunging of their own accord into her ribs. Symptoms like these are enough to make people peevish, and no wonder that they remain so until supper-time, doing little more than doze and complain, unless Mr. Merrywinkle calls out very loud to a servant "to keep that draught out," or rushes into the passage to flourish his fist in the countenance of the twopenny-postman, for daring to give such a knock as he has just performed, at the door of a private gentleman with nerves.

Supper, coming after dinner, should consist of some gentle provocative; and therefore the tittivating art is again in requisition, and again done honour to by Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle, still comforted and abetted by Mrs. Chopper. After supper, it is ten to one but the last-named old lady becomes worse, and is led off to bed with the chronic complaint in full vigour. Mr. and Mrs. Merrywinkle having administered to her a warm cordial, which is something of the strongest, then repair to their own room, where Mr. Merrywinkle, with his legs and feet in hot water, superintends the mulling of some wine which he is to drink at the very moment he plunges into bed; while Mrs. Merrywinkle, in garments whose nature is unknown to and unimagined by all but married men, takes four small pills with a spasmodic jerk between each, and finally comes to something hot and fragrant out of another little saucepan, which serves as her composing draught for the night.

There is another kind of couple who coddle themselves, and who do so at a cheaper rate and on more spare diet, because they are niggardly and parsimonious; for which reason they are kind enough to coddle their visitors too. It is unnecessary to describe them, for our readers may rest assured of the accuracy of these general principles; that all couples who coddle themselves are selfish and slothful;

that they charge upon every wind that blows, every rain that falls, and every vapour that hangs in the air; the evils which arise from their own imprudence or the gloom which is engendered in their own tempers; and that all men and women, in couples or otherwise, who fall into exclusive habits of self-indulgence, and forget their natural sympathy and close connection with everybody and everything in the world around them, not only neglect the first duty of life, but, by a happy retributive justice, deprive themselves of its truest and best enjoyments.

THE OLD COUPLE.

THEY are grandfather and grandmother to a dozen grown people, and have great-grandchildren besides; their bodies are bent, their hair is grey, their step tottering and infirm. Is this the lightsome pair whose wedding was so merry; and have the young couple, indeed, grown old so soon?

It seems but yesterday, and yet what a host of cares and griefs are crowded into the intervening time, which, reckoned by them, lengthens out into a century! How many new associations have wreathed themselves about their hearts since then! The old time is gone, and a new time is come for others—not for them. They are but the rusting link that feebly joins the two, and is silently loosening its hold and dropping asunder.

It seems but yesterday, and yet three of their children have sunk into the grave, and the tree that shades it has grown quite old. One was an infant—they wept for him; the next a girl, a slight young thing too delicate for earth—her loss was hard indeed to bear; the third a man—that was the worst of all, but even that grief is softened now.

It seems but yesterday, and yet the gay and laughing faces of that bright morning have changed and vanished from aboveground. Faint likenesses of some remain about them yet, but they are very faint and scarcely to be traced. The rest are only seen in dreams, and even they are unlike what they were in eyes so old and dim.

One or two dresses from the bridal wardrobe are yet preserved. They are of a quaint and antique fashion, and seldom seen except in pictures. White has turned yellow, and brighter hues have faded. Do you wonder, child? The wrinkled face was once as smooth as yours, the eyes as bright, the shrivelled skin as fair and delicate. It is the work of hands that have been dust these many years.

Where are the fairy lovers of that happy day, whose annual return comes upon the old man and his wife like the echo of some village bell which has long been silent? Let yonder peevish bachelor, racked by rheumatic pains, and quarrelling with the world, let him answer the question. He recollects something of a favourite playmate, her name was Lucy—so they tell him. He is not sure whether she was married, or went abroad, or died. It is a long while ago, and he don't remember.

Is nothing as it used to be? does no one feel, or think, or act, as in days of yore? Yes. There is an aged woman who once lived servant with the old lady's father, and is sheltered in an almshouse not far off. She is still attached to the family, and loves them all; she nursed the children in her lap, and tended in their sickness those who are no more. Her old mistress has still something of youth in her eyes, the young ladies are like what she was but not quite so handsome, nor are the gentlemen as stately as Mr. Harvey used to be. She has seen a great deal of trouble: her husband and her son died long ago; but she has got over that, and is happy now—quite happy.

If ever her attachment to her old protectors were disturbed by fresher cares and hopes, it has long since resumed its former current. It has filled the void in the poor creature's heart, and replaced the love of kindred. Death has not left her alone, and this, with a roof above her head, and a warm hearth to sit by, makes her cheerful and contented. Does she remember the marriage of great-grandmamma? Ay, that she does, as well as if it was only yesterday. You wouldn't think it to look at her now, and perhaps she ought not to say so herself, but she was as smart a young girl then as you 'd wish to see. She recollects she took a friend of hers upstairs to see Miss Emma dressed for church; her name was—ah! She forgets the name, but she remembers that she was a very pretty girl, and that she married not long afterwards, and lived—it has quite passed out of her mind where she lived, but she knows she had a bad husband who used her ill, and that she died in Lambeth workhouse. Dear, dear! in Lambeth workhouse.

And the old couple—have they no comfort or enjoyment of existence? See them among

their grandchildren and great-grandchildren; how garrulous they are, how they compare one with another, and insist on likenesses which no one else can see! how gently the old lady lectures the girls on points of breeding and decorum, and points the moral by anecdotes of herself in her young days! how the old gentleman chuckles over boyish feats and roguish tricks, and tells long stories of a "barring out" achieved at the school he went to, which was very wrong, he tells the boys, and never to be imitated, of course, but which he cannot help letting them know was very pleasant too—especially when he kissed the master's niece. This last, however, is a point on which the old lady is very tender, for she considers it a shocking and indelicate thing to talk about, and always says so whenever it is mentioned, never failing to observe that he ought to be very penitent for having been so sinful. So the old gentleman gets no further, and what the schoolmaster's niece said afterwards (which he is always going to tell) is lost to posterity.

The old gentleman is eighty years old to-day—"Eighty years old, Crofts, and never had a headache," he tells the barber who shaves him (the barber being a young fellow, and very subject to that complaint). "That's a great age, Crofts," says the old gentleman.

"I don't think it 's such a wery great age, sir," replies the barber.

"Crofts," rejoins the old gentleman, "you 're talking nonsense to me. Eighty not a great age!"

"It 's a wery great age, sir, for a gentleman to be as healthy and active as you are," returns the barber, "but my grandfather, sir, he was ninety-four."

"You don't mean that, Crofts?" says the old gentleman.

"I do, indeed, sir," retorts the barber; "and as wiggerous as Julius Cæsar, my grandfather was."

The old gentleman muses a little time, and then says, "What did he die of, Crofts?"

"He died accidentally, sir," returns the barber; "he didn't mean to do it. He always would go running about the streets—walking never satisfied *his* spirit—and he run against a post, and died of a hurt in his chest."

The old gentleman says no more until the shaving is concluded, and then he gives Crofts half a crown to drink his health. He is a little doubtful of the barber's veracity afterwards, and telling the anecdote to the old lady, affects to make very light of it—though to be sure (he adds) there was Old Parr, and in some parts of England ninety-five or so is a common age, quite a common age.

This morning the old couple are cheerful, but serious, recalling old times as well as they can remember them, and dwelling upon many passages in their past lives which the day brings to mind. The old lady reads aloud, in a tremulous voice, out of a great Bible, and the old gentleman, with his hand to his ear, listens with profound respect. When the book is closed, they sit silent for a short space, and afterwards resume their conversation, with a reference perhaps, to their dead children, as a subject not unsuited to that they have just left. By degrees they are led to consider which of those who survive are the most like those dearly-remembered objects, and so they fall into a less solemn strain, and become cheerful again.

How many people in all, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and one or two intimate friends of the family, dine together to-day at the eldest son's, to congratulate the old couple and wish them many happy returns, is a calculation beyond our powers; but this we know, that the old couple no sooner present themselves, very sprucely and carefully attired, than there is a violent shouting and rushing forward of the younger branches with all manner of presents, such as pocket-books, pencil-cases, pen-wipers, watch-papers, pincushions, sleeve-buckles, worked slippers, watch-guards, and even a nutmeg-grater, the latter article being presented by a very chubby and very little boy, who exhibits it in great triumph as an extraordinary variety. The old couples' emotion at these tokens of remembrance occasions quite a pathetic scene, of which the chief ingredients are a vast quantity of kissing and hugging, and repeated wipings of small eyes and noses with small square pocket-handkerchiefs, which don't come at all easily out of small pockets. Even the peevish bachelor is moved, and he says, as he presents the old gentleman with a queer sort of antique ring from his own finger, that he 'll be de'ed if he doesn't think he looks younger than he did ten years ago.

But the great time is after dinner, when the dessert and wine are on the table, which is pushed back to make plenty of room, and they are all gathered in a large circle round the fire, for it is then—the glasses being filled, and everybody ready to drink the toast—that two great-grandchildren rush out at a given signal, and presently return, dragging in old Jane Adams, leaning upon her crutched stick, and trembling with age and pleasure. Who so popular as poor old Jane, nurse and story-teller in ordinary to two generations? and who so happy as she, striving to bend her stiff limbs into a curtsey, while tears of pleasure steal down her withered cheeks?

The old couple sit side by side, and the old time seems like yesterday indeed. Looking back upon the path they have travelled, its dust and ashes disappear; the flowers that withered long ago show brightly again upon its borders, and they grow young once more in the youth of those about them.

CONCLUSION.

We have taken for the subjects of the foregoing moral essays twelve samples of married couples, carefully selected from a large stock on hand, open to the inspection of all comers. These samples are intended for the benefit of the rising generation of both sexes, and, for their more easy and pleasant information, have been separately ticketed and labelled in the manner they have seen.

We have purposely excluded from consideration the couple in which the lady reigns paramount and supreme, holding such cases to be of a very unnatural kind, and, like hideous births and other monstrous deformities, only to be discreetly and sparingly exhibited.

And here our self-imposed task would have ended, but that to those young ladies and gentlemen who are yet revolving singly round the church, awaiting the advent of that time when the mysterious laws of attraction shall draw them towards it in couples, we are desirous of addressing a few last words.

Before marriage, and afterwards, let them learn to centre all their hopes of real and lasting happiness in their own fireside; let them cherish the faith that in home, and all the English virtues which the love of home engenders, lies the only true source of domestic felicity; let them believe that round the household gods contentment and tranquillity cluster in their gentlest and most graceful forms, and that many weary hunters of happiness through the noisy world have learnt this truth too late, and found a cheerful spirit and a quiet mind only at home at last.

How much may depend on the education of daughters and the conduct of mothers; how much of the brightest part of our old national character may be perpetuated by their wisdom, or frittered away by their folly; how much of it may have been lost already, and how much more in danger of vanishing every day—are questions too weighty for discussion here, but well deserving a little serious consideration from all young couples, nevertheless.

To that one young couple on whose bright destiny the thoughts of nations are fixed, may the youth of England look, and not in vain, for an example. From that one young couple, blessed and favoured as they are, may they learn that even the glare and glitter of a Court, the splendour of a palace, and the pomp and glory of a throne, yield in their power of conferring happiness to domestic worth and virtue. From that one young couple may they learn that the crown of a great empire, costly and jewelled though it be, gives place in the estimation of a Queen to the plain gold ring that links her woman's nature to that of tens of thousands of her humble subjects, and guards in her woman's heart one secret store of tenderness, whose proudest boast shall be that it knows no Royalty save Nature's own, and no pride of birth but being the child of Heaven.

So shall the highest young couple in the land for once hear the truth, when men throw up their caps, and cry with loving shouts—

"God bless them."

THE MUDFOG PAPERS

PUBLIC LIFE OF MR. TULRUMBLE

THE PANTOMIME OF LIFE

SOME PARTICULARS CONCERNING A LION

THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

PUBLIC LIFE OF MR. TULRUMBLE,

ONCE MAYOR OF MUDFOG.

MUDFOG is a pleasant town—a remarkably pleasant town—situated in a charming hollow by the side of a river, from which river Mudfog derives an agreeable scent of pitch, tar, coals, and rope-yarn, a roving population in oilskin hats, a pretty steady influx of drunken bargemen, and a great many other maritime advantages. There is a good deal of water about Mudfog, and yet it is not exactly the sort of town for a watering-place, either. Water is a perverse sort of element at the best of times, and in Mudfog it is particularly so. In winter it comes oozing down the streets and tumbling over the fields,—nay, rushes into the very cellars and kitchens of the houses, with a lavish prodigality that might well be dispensed with; but in the hot summer weather it *will* dry up and turn green; and, although green is a very good colour in its way, especially in grass, still it certainly is not becoming to water; and it cannot be denied that the beauty of Mudfog is rather impaired even by this trifling circumstance. Mudfog is a healthy place—very healthy;—damp, perhaps, but none the worse for that. It 's quite a mistake to suppose that damp is unwholesome: plants thrive best in damp situations, and why shouldn't men? The inhabitants of Mudfog are unanimous in asserting that there exists not a finer race of people on the face of the earth: here we have an indisputable and veracious contradiction of the vulgar error at once. So, admitting Mudfog to be damp, we distinctly state that it is salubrious.

The town of Mudfog is extremely picturesque. Limehouse and Ratcliff Highway are both something like it, but they give you a very faint idea of Mudfog. There are a great many more public houses in Mudfog—more than in Ratcliff Highway and Limehouse put together. The public buildings, too, are very imposing. We consider the town hall one of the finest specimens of shed architecture extant; it is a combination of the pig-stye and tea-garden-box orders; and the simplicity of its design is of surpassing beauty. The idea of placing a large window on one side of the door, and a small one on the other, is particularly happy. There is a fine bold Doric beauty, too, about the padlock and scraper, which is strictly in keeping with the general effect.

In this room do the mayor and corporation of Mudfog assemble together in solemn council for the public weal. Seated on the massive wooden benches, which, with the table in the centre, form the only furniture of the white-washed apartment, the sage men of Mudfog spend hour after hour in grave deliberation. Here they settle at what hour of the night the public houses shall be closed, at what hour of the morning they shall be permitted to open, how soon it shall be lawful for people to eat their dinner on church days, and other great political questions; and sometimes, long after silence has fallen on the town, and the distant lights from the shops and houses have ceased to twinkle, like far-off stars, to the sight of the boatmen on the river, the illumination in the two unequal-sized windows of the town hall, warns the inhabitants of Mudfog that its little body of legislators, like a larger and better-known body of the same genus, a great deal more noisy, and not a whit more profound, are patriotically dozing away in company, far into the night, for their country's good.

Among this knot of sage and learned men, no one was so eminently distinguished, during many years, for the quiet modesty of his appearance and demeanour, as Nicholas Tulrumble, the well-known coal-dealer. However exciting the subject of discussion, however animated the tone of the debate, or however warm the personalities exchanged (and even in Mudfog we get personal sometimes), Nicholas Tulrumble was always the same. To say truth, Nicholas, being an industrious man, and always up betimes, was apt to fall asleep when a debate began, and to remain asleep till it was over, when he would wake up very much refreshed, and give his vote with the greatest complacency. The fact was, that Nicholas Tulrumble, knowing that everybody there had made up his mind beforehand, considered the talking as just a long botheration about nothing at all; and to the present hour it remains a question, whether, on this point at all events, Nicholas Tulrumble was not pretty near right.

Time, which strews a man's head with silver, sometimes fills his pockets with gold. As he gradually performed one good office for Nicholas Tulrumble, he was obliging enough not to omit the other. Nicholas began life in a wooden tenement of four feet square,

with a capital of two and ninepence, and a stock-in-trade of three bushels and a half of coals, exclusive of the large lump which hung, by way of signboard, outside. Then he enlarged the shed, and kept a truck; then he left the shed, and the truck too, and started a donkey and a Mrs. Tulrumble; then he moved again and set up a cart; the cart was soon afterwards exchanged for a waggon; and so he went on like his great predecessor Whittington—only without a cat for a partner—increasing in wealth and fame, until at last he gave up business altogether, and retired with Mrs. Tulrumble and family to Mudfog Hall, which he had himself erected, on something which he attempted to delude himself into the belief was a hill, about a quarter of a mile distant from the town of Mudfog.

About this time, it began to be murmured in Mudfog that Nicholas Tulrumble was growing vain and haughty; that prosperity and success had corrupted the simplicity of his manners and tainted the natural goodness of his heart; in short, that he was setting up for a public character and a great gentleman, and affected to look down upon his old companions with compassion and contempt. Whether these reports were at the time well founded or not, certain it is that Mrs. Tulrumble very shortly afterwards started a four-wheel chaise, driven by a tall postillion in a yellow cap; that Mr. Tulrumble junior took to smoking cigars and calling the footman a "feller," and that Mr. Tulrumble from that time forth was no more seen in his old seat in the chimney-corner of the Lighterman's Arms at night. This looked bad; but more than this, it began to be observed that Mr. Nicholas Tulrumble attended the corporation meetings more frequently than heretofore, and he no longer went to sleep as he had done for so many years, but propped his eyelids open with his two forefingers; that he read the newspapers by himself at home, and that he was in the habit of indulging abroad in distant and mysterious allusions to "masses of people," and "the property of the country," and "productive power," and "the moneyed interest;" all of which denoted and proved that Nicholas Tulrumble was either mad or worse, and it puzzled the good people of Mudfog amazingly.

At length, about the middle of the month of October, Mr. Tulrumble and family went up to London, the middle of October being, as Mrs. Tulrumble informed her acquaintance in Mudfog, the very height of the fashionable season.

Somehow or other, just about this time, despite the health-preserving air of Mudfog, the Mayor died. It was a most extraordinary circumstance. He had lived in Mudfog for eighty-five years. The corporation didn't understand it at all; indeed it was with great difficulty that one old gentleman, who was a great stickler for forms, was dissuaded from proposing a vote of censure on such unaccountable conduct. Strange as it was, however, die he did, without taking the slightest notice of the corporation, and the corporation were imperatively called upon to elect his successor. So they met for the purpose, and being very full of Nicholas Tulrumble just then, and Nicholas Tulrumble being a very important man, they elected him, and wrote off to London by the very next post to acquaint Nicholas Tulrumble with his new elevation.

Now, it being November time, and Mr. Nicholas Tulrumble being in the capital, it fell out that he was present at the Lord Mayor's show and dinner, at the sight of the glory and splendour whereof, he, Mr. Tulrumble, was greatly mortified, inasmuch as the reflection would force itself on his mind, that, had he been born in London instead of in Mudfog, he might have been a Lord Mayor too, and have patronized the judges, and been affable to the Lord Chancellor, and friendly with the Premier, and coldly condescending to the Secretary to the Treasury, and have dined with a flag behind his back, and done a great many other acts and deeds which unto Lord Mayors of London peculiarly appertain. The more he thought of the Lord Mayor, the more enviable a personage he seemed. To be a King was all very well; but what was the King to the Lord Mayor? When the King made a speech, everybody knew it was somebody else's writing; whereas here was the Lord Mayor, talking away for half an hour—all out of his own head—amidst the enthusiastic applause of the whole company, while it was notorious that the King might talk to his Parliament till he was black in the face without getting so much as a single cheer. As all these reflections passed through the mind of Mr. Nicholas Tulrumble, the Lord Mayor of London appeared to him the greatest sovereign on the face of the earth, beating the Emperor of Russia all to nothing, and leaving the Great Mogul immeasurably behind.

Mr. Nicholas Tulrumble was pondering over these things, and inwardly cursing the fate which had pitched his coal-shed in Mudfog, when the letter of the corporation was put into his hand. A crimson flush mantled over his face as he read it, for visions of brightness were already dancing before his imagination.

"My dear," said Mr. Tulrumble to his wife, "they have elected me Mayor of Mudfog."

"Lor-a-mussy!" said Mrs. Tulrumble; "why, what 's become of old Sniggs?"

"The late Mr. Sniggs, Mrs. Tulrumble," said Mr. Tulrumble sharply, for he by no means approved of the notion of unceremoniously designating a gentleman who filled the high office of Mayor as "Old Sniggs,"—"the late Mr. Sniggs, Mrs. Tulrumble, is dead."

The communication was very unexpected; but Mrs. Tulrumble only ejaculated "Lor-a-

mussy!" once again, as if a mayor were a mere ordinary Christian, at which Mr. Tulrumble frowned gloomily.

"What a pity 'taint in London, ain't it?" said Mrs. Tulrumble, after a short pause; "what a pity 'taint in London, where you might have had a show."

"I *might* have a show in Mudfog, if I thought proper, I apprehend," said Mr. Tulrumble mysteriously.

"Lor! so you might, I declare," replied Mrs. Tulrumble.

"And a good one too," said Mr. Tulrumble.

"Delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulrumble.

"One which would rather astonish the ignorant people down there," said Mr. Tulrumble.

"It would kill them with envy," said Mrs. Tulrumble.

So it was agreed that his Majesty's lieges in Mudfog should be astonished with splendour and slaughtered with envy, and that such a show should take place as had never been seen in that town, or in any other town before,—no, not even in London itself.

On the very next day after the receipt of the letter, down came the tall postillion in a post-chaise, not upon one of the horses, but inside — actually inside the chaise, — and, driving up to the very door of the town hall, where the corporation were assembled, delivered a letter, written by the Lord knows who, and signed by Nicholas Tulrumble, in which Nicholas said, all through four sides of closely-written, gilt-edged, hot-pressed, Bath post letter-paper, that he responded to the call of his fellow-townsmen with feelings of heartfelt delight; that he accepted the arduous office which their confidence had imposed upon him; that they would never find him shrinking from the discharge of his duty; that he would endeavour to execute his functions with all that dignity which their magnitude and importance demanded; and a great deal more to the same effect. But even this was not all. The tall postIllion produced from his right-hand top-boot, a damp copy of that afternoon's number of the county paper; and there, in large type, running the whole length of the very first column, was a long address from Nicholas Tulrumble to the inhabitants of Mudfog, in which he said he cheerfully complied with their requisition; and, in short, as if to prevent any mistake about the matter, told them over again what a grand fellow he meant to be, in very much the same terms as those in which he had already told them all about the matter in his letter.

The corporation stared at one another very hard at all this, and then looked as if for explanation to the tall postillion, but as the tall postillion was intently contemplating the gold tassel on the top of his yellow cap, and could have afforded no explanation whatever, even if his thoughts had been entirely disengaged, they contented themselves with coughing very dubiously, and looking very grave. The tall postillion then delivered another letter, in which Nicholas Tulrumble informed the corporation that he intended repairing to the town hall, in grand state and gorgeous procession, on the Monday afternoon next ensuing. At this the corporation looked still more solemn; but, as the epistle wound up with a formal invitation to the whole body to dine with the Mayor on that day, at Mudfog Hall, Mudfog Hill, Mudfog, they began to see the fun of the thing directly, and sent back their compliments, and they'd be sure to come.

Now, there happened to be in Mudfog, as somehow or other there does happen to be in almost every town in the British dominions, and perhaps in foreign dominions too—we think it very likely, but, being no great traveller, cannot distinctly say—there happened to be in Mudfog a merry-tempered, pleasant-faced, good-for-nothing sort of vagabond, with an invincible dislike to manual labour, and an unconquerable attachment to strong beer and spirits, whom everybody knew, and nobody, except his wife, took the trouble to quarrel with, who inherited from his ancestors the appellation of Edward Twigger, and rejoiced in the *sobriquet* of Bottle-nosed Ned. He was drunk upon the average once a day, and penitent upon an equally fair calculation once a month; and when he was penitent, he was invariably in the very last stage of maudlin intoxication. He was a ragged, roving, roaring kind of fellow, with a burly form, a sharp wit, and a ready head, and could turn his hand to anything when he chose to do it. He was by no means opposed to hard labour on principle, for he would work away at a cricket match by the day together, — running, and catching, and batting, and bowling, and revelling in toil which would exhaust a galley-slave. He would have been invaluable to a fire office: never was a man with such a natural taste for pumping engines, running up ladders, and throwing furniture out of two-pair-of-stairs windows; nor was this the only element in which he was at home: he was a humane society in himself, a portable drag, an animated life-preserver, and had saved more people in his time from drowning than the Plymouth life-boat, or Captain Manby's apparatus. With all these qualifications, notwithstanding his dissipation, Bottle-nosed Ned was a general favourite; and the authorities of Mudfog, remembering his numerous services to the population, allowed him in return to get drunk in his own way, without the fear of stocks, fine, or imprisonment. He had a general licence, and he showed his sense of the compliment by making the most of it.

We have been thus particular in describing the character and avocations of Bottle-nosed Ned, because it enables us to introduce a fact politely, without hauling it into the reader's

presence with indecent haste by the head and shoulders, and brings us very naturally to relate, that on the very same evening on which Mr. Nicholas Tulrumble and family returned to Mudfog, Mr. Tulrumble's new secretary, just imported from London, with a pale face and slight whiskers, thrust his head down to the very bottom of his neckcloth-tie, in at the tap-room door of the Lighterman's Arms, and inquiring whether one Ned Twigger was luxuriating within, announced himself as the bearer of a message from Nicholas Tulrumble, Esquire, requiring Mr. Twigger's immediate attendance at the Hall, on private and particular business. It being by no means Mr. Twigger's interest to affront the Mayor, he rose from the fireplace with a slight sigh, and followed the light-whiskered secretary through the dirt and wet of Mudfog streets, up to Mudfog Hall, without further ado.

Mr. Nicholas Tulrumble was seated in a small cavern with a skylight, which he called his library, sketching out a plan of the procession on a large sheet of paper; and into the cavern the secretary ushered Ned Twigger.

"Well, Twigger," said Nicholas Tulrumble, condescendingly.

There was a time when Twigger would have replied, "Well, Nick," but that was in the days of the truck, and a couple of years before the donkey; so he only bowed.

"I want you to go into training, Twigger," said Mr. Tulrumble.

"What for, sir?" inquired Ned, with a stare.

"Hush, hush, Twigger!" said the Mayor. "Shut the door, Mr. Jennings. Look here, Twigger."

As the Mayor said this, he unlocked a high closet, and disclosed a complete suit of brass armour, of gigantic dimensions.

"I want you to wear this next Monday, Twigger," said the Mayor.

"Bless your heart and soul, sir!" replied Ned, "you might as well ask me to wear a seventy-four-pounder, or a cast-iron boiler."

"Nonsense, Twigger, nonsense!" said the Mayor.

"I couldn't stand under it, sir," said Twigger; "it would make mashed potatoes of me if I attempted it."

"Pooh, pooh, Twigger!" returned the Mayor. "I tell you I have seen it done with my own eyes in London, and the man wasn't half such a man as you are, either."

"I should as soon have thought of a man's wearing the case of an eight-day clock to save his linen," said Twigger, casting a look of apprehension at the brass suit.

"It's the easiest thing in the world," rejoined the Mayor.

"It's nothing," said Mr. Jennings.

"When you're used to it," added Ned.

"You do it by degrees," said the Mayor. "You would begin with one piece to-morrow, and two the next day, and so on, till you had got it all on." (Mr. Jennings gave Twigger a glass of rum). "Just try the breastplate, Twigger. Stay; take another glass of rum first. Help me to lift it, Mr. Jennings. Stand firm, Twigger! There!—it isn't half as heavy as it looks, is it?"

Twigger was a good strong, stout fellow; so, after a great deal of staggering, he managed to keep himself up under the breast-plate, and even contrived, with the aid of another glass of rum, to walk about in it, and the gauntlets into the bargain. He made a trial of the helmet, but was not equally successful, inasmuch as he tipped over instantly,—an accident which Mr. Tulrumble clearly demonstrated to be occasioned by his not having a counteracting weight of brass on his legs.

"Now, wear that with grace and propriety on Monday next," said Tulrumble, "and I'll make your fortune."

"I'll try what I can do, sir," said Twigger.

"It must be kept a profound secret," said Tulrumble.

"Of course, sir," replied Twigger.

"And you must be sober," said Tulrumble; "perfectly sober."

Mr. Twigger at once solemnly pledged himself to be as sober as a judge, and Nicholas Tulrumble was satisfied, although, had we been Nicholas, we should certainly have exacted some promise of a more specific nature; inasmuch as, having attended the Mudfog assizes in the evening more than once, we can solemnly testify to having seen judges with very strong symptoms of dinner under their wigs. However, that's neither here nor there.

The next day, and the day following, and the day after that, Ned Twigger was securely locked up in the small cavern with the skylight, hard at work at the armour. With every additional piece he could manage to stand upright in, he had an additional glass of rum; and at last, after many partial suffocations, he contrived to get on the whole suit, and to stagger up and down the room in it, like an intoxicated effigy from Westminster Abbey.

Never was man so delighted as Nicholas Tulrumble; never was woman so charmed as Nicholas Tulrumble's wife. Here was a sight for the common people of Mudford! A live man in brass armour! Why, they would go wild with wonder!

The day—*the* Monday—arrived.

If the morning had been made to order it couldn't have been better adapted to the purpose. They never showed a better fog in London on Lord Mayor's day, than enwrapped the town of Mudfog on that eventful occasion. It had risen slowly and surely from the green and stagnant water with the first light of morning, until it reached a little above the lamp-post tops; and there it had stopped, with a sleepy, sluggish obstinacy,

which bade defiance to the sun, who had got up very bloodshot about the eyes, as if he had been at a drinking party overnight, and was doing his day's work with the worst possible grace. The thick damp mist hung over the town like a huge gauze curtain. All was dim and dismal. The church steeples had bidden a temporary adieu to the world below; and every object of lesser importance—houses, barns, hedges, trees, and barges—had all taken the veil.

The church clock struck one. A cracked trumpet from the front garden of Mudfog Hall produced a feeble flourish, as if some asthmatic person had coughed into it accidentally, the gate flew open, and out came a gentleman on a moist sugar-coloured charger intended to represent a herald, but bearing a much stronger resemblance to a court card on horseback. This was one of the Circus people who always came down to Mudfog at that time of the year, and who had been engaged by Nicholas Tulrumble expressly for the occasion. There was the horse whisking his tail about, balancing himself on his hind legs and flourishing away with his fore feet, in a manner which would have gone to the hearts and souls of any reasonable crowd. But a Mudfog crowd never was a reasonable one, and in all probability never will be. Instead of scattering the very fog with their shouts, as they ought most indubitably to have done, and were fully intended to do by Nicholas Tulrumble, they no sooner recognized the herald than they began to growl forth the most unqualified disapprobation at the bare notion of his riding like any other man. If he had come out on his head, indeed, or jumping through a hoop, or flying through a red-hot drum, or even standing on one leg with his other foot in his mouth, they might have had something to say to him; but for a professional gentleman to sit astride in the saddle, with his feet in the stirrups, was rather too good a joke. So the herald was a decided failure, and the crowd hooted with great energy as he pranced ingloriously away.

On the procession came. We are afraid to say how many supernumeraries there were, in striped shirts and black velvet caps, to imitate the London watermen, or how many base imitations of running footmen, or how many banners which, owing to the heaviness of the atmosphere, could by no means be prevailed on to display their inscriptions; still less do we feel disposed to relate how the men who played the wind instruments, looking up into the sky (we mean the fog) with musical fervour, walked through pools of water and hillocks of mud, till they covered the powdered heads of the running footmen aforesaid with splashes that looked curious but not ornamental; or how the barrel-organ performer put on the wrong stop, and played one tune while the band played another; or how the horses, being used to the arena, and not to the streets, would stand still and dance, instead of going on and prancing—all of which are matters which might be dilated upon to great advantage, but which we have not the least intention of dilating upon, notwithstanding.

Oh! it was a grand and beautiful sight to behold a corporation in glass coaches, provided at the sole cost and charge of Nicholas Tulrumble, coming rolling along, like a funeral out of mourning, and to watch the attempts the corporation made to look great and solemn, when Nicholas Tulrumble himself, in the four-wheel chaise, with the tall postillion, rolled out after them, with Mr. Jennings on one side to look like a chaplain, and a supernumerary on the other, with an old life-guardsman's sabre, to imitate the sword-bearer; and to see the tears rolling down the faces of the mob as they screamed with merriment. This was beautiful! and so was the appearance of Mrs. Tulrumble and son, as they bowed with grave dignity out of their coach window to all the dirty faces that were laughing around them. But it is not even with this that we have to do, but with the sudden stopping of the procession at another blast of the trumpet, whereat, and whereupon, a profound silence ensued, and all eyes were turned towards Mudfog Hall, in the confident anticipation of some new wonder.

"They won't laugh now, Mr. Jennings," said Nicholas Tulrumble.

"I think not, sir," said Mr. Jennings.

"See how eager they look," said Nicholas Tulrumble. "Aha! the laugh will be on our side now; eh, Mr. Jennings?"

"No doubt of that, sir," replied Mr. Jennings; and Nicholas Tulrumble, in a state of pleasurable excitement, stood up in the four-wheel chaise, and telegraphed gratification to the Mayoress behind.

While all this was going forward, Ned Twigger had descended into the kitchen of Mudfog Hall for the purpose of indulging the servants with a private view of the curiosity that was to burst upon the town; and, somehow or other, the footman was so companionable, and the housemaid so kind, and the cook so friendly, that he could not resist the offer of the first-mentioned to sit down and take something—just to drink success to master in.

So down Ned Twigger sat himself in his brass livery on the top of the kitchen table; and in a mug of something strong, paid for by the unconscious Nicholas Tulrumble, and provided by the companionable footman, drank success to the Mayor and his procession; and, as Ned laid by his helmet to imbibe the something strong, the companionable footman put it on his own head, to the immeasurable and unrecordable delight of the cook and housemaid. The companionable footman was very facetious to Ned, and Ned

was very gallant to the cook and housemaid by turns. They were all very cozy and very comfortable, and the something strong went briskly round.

At last Ned Twigger was loudly called for by the procession people; and having had his helmet fixed on, in a very complicated manner, by the companionable footman, and the kind housemaid, and the friendly cook, he walked gravely forth, and appeared before the multitude.

The crowd roared: it was not with wonder, it was not with surprise; it was most decidedly and unquestionably with laughter.

"What!" said Mr. Tulrumble, starting up in the four-wheel chaise. "Laughing? If they laugh at a man in real brass armour, they'd laugh when their own fathers were dying. Why doesn't he go into his place, Mr. Jennings? What's he rolling down towards us for?—he has no business here."

"I am afriad, sir——" faltered Mr. Jennings.

"Afraid of what, sir?" said Nicholas Tulrumble, looking up into the secretary's face.

"I am afraid he's drunk, sir," replied Mr. Jennings.

Nicholas Tulrumble took one look at the extraordinary figure that was bearing down upon them; and then, clasping his secretary by the arm, uttered an audible groan in anguish of spirit.

It is a melancholy fact that Mr. Twigger having full license to demand a single glass of rum on the putting on of every piece of the armour, got, by some means or other, rather out of his calculation in the hurry and confusion of preparation, and drank about four glasses to a piece instead of one, not to mention the something strong which went on the top of it. Whether the brass armour checked the natural flow of the perspiration, and thus prevented the spirit from evaporating, we are not scientific enough to know; but, whatever the cause was, Mr. Twigger no sooner found himself outside the gate of Mudfog Hall, than he also found himself in a very considerable state of intoxication; and hence his extraordinary style of progressing. This was bad enough, but, as if fate and fortune had conspired against Nicholas Tulrumble, Mr. Twigger, not having been penitent for a good calendar month, took it into his head to be most especially and particularly sentimental, just when his repentance could have been most conveniently dispensed with. Immense tears were rolling down his cheeks, and he was vainly endeavouring to conceal his grief by applying to his eyes a blue cotton pocket-handkerchief with white spots—an article not strictly in keeping with a suit of armour some three hundred years old, or thereabouts.

"Twigger, you villain!" said Nicholas Tulrumble, quite forgetting his dignity, "go back."

"Never," said Ned. "I'm a miserable wretch. I'll never leave you."

The bystanders of course received this declaration with acclamations of "That's right, Ned; don't!"

"I don't intend it," said Ned, with all the obstinacy of a very tipsy man. "I'm very unhappy. I'm the wretched father of an unfortunate family; but I am very faithful, sir. I'll never leave you." Having reiterated this obliging promise, Ned proceeded in broken words to harangue the crowd upon the number of years he had lived in Mudfog, the excessive respectability of his character, and other topics of the like nature.

"Here, will anybody lead him away?" said Nicholas; "if they'll call on me afterwards, I'll reward them well."

Two or three men stepped forward, with the view of bearing Ned off, when the secretary interposed.

"Take care! take care!" said Mr. Jennings. "I beg your pardon, sir; but they'd better not go too near him, because, if he falls over, he'll certainly crush somebody."

At this hint the crowd retired on all sides to a very respectful distance, and left Ned, like the Duke of Devonshire, in a little circle of his own.

"But, Mr. Jennings," said Nicholas Tulrumble, "he'll be suffocated."

"I'm very sorry for it, sir," replied Mr. Jennings; "but nobody can get that armour off, without his own assistance. I'm quite certain of it, from the way he put it on."

Here Ned wept dolefully, and shook his helmeted head, in a manner that might have touched a heart of stone; but the crowd had not hearts of stone, and they laughed heartily.

"Dear me, Mr. Jennings," said Nicholas, turning pale at the possibility of Ned's being smothered in his antique costume, "dear me, Mr. Jennings, can nothing be done with him?"

"Nothing at all," replied Ned, "nothing at all. Gentlemen, I'm an unhappy wretch. I'm a body, gentlemen, in a brass coffin."

At this poetical idea of his own conjuring up, Ned cried so much that the people began to get sympathetic, and to ask what Nicholas Tulrumble meant by putting a man into such a machine as that; and one individual in a hairy waistcoat like the top of a trunk, who had previously expressed his opinion that if Ned hadn't been a poor man, Nicholas wouldn't have dared do it, hinted at the propriety of breaking the four-wheel chaise, or Nicholas's head, or both, which last compound proposition the crowd seemed to consider a very good notion.

It was not acted upon, however, for it had hardly been broached, when Ned Twigger's wife made her appearance abruptly in the little circle before noticed, and Ned no sooner caught a glimpse of her face and form, than

from the mere force of habit he set off towards his home just as fast as his legs could carry him; and that was not very quick in the present instance either, for, however ready they might have been to carry *him*, they couldn't get on very well under the brass armour. So Mrs. Twigger had plenty of time to denounce Nicholas Tulrumble to his face; to express her opinion that he was a decided monster; and to intimate that, if her ill-used husband sustained any personal damage from the brass armour, she would have the law of Nicholas Tulrumble for man-slaughter. When she had said all this with due vehemence, she posted after Ned, who was dragging himself along as best he could, and deploring his unhappiness in most dismal tones.

What a wailing and screaming Ned's children raised when he got home at last! Mrs. Twigger tried to undo the armour, first in one place, and then in another, but she couldn't manage it; so she tumbled Ned into bed, helmet, armour, gauntlets, and all. Such a creaking as the beadstead made, under Ned's weight in his new suit! It didn't break down, though; and there Ned lay, like the anonymous vessel in the Bay of Biscay, till next day, drinking barley-water and looking miserable; and every time he groaned, his good lady said it served him right, which was all the consolation Ned Twigger got.

Nicholas Tulrumble and the gorgeous procession went on together to the town hall, amid the hisses and groans of all the spectators, who had suddenly taken it into their heads to consider poor Ned a martyr. Nicholas was formally installed in his new office, in acknowledgment of which ceremony he delivered himself a speech, composed by the secretary, which was very long, and no doubt very good, only the noise of the people outside prevented anybody from hearing it, but Nicholas Tulrumble himself. After which, the procession got back to Mudfog Hall anyhow it could; and Nicholas and the corporation sat down to dinner.

But the dinner was flat, and Nicholas was disappointed. They were such dull, sleepy old fellows, that corporation. Nicholas made quite as long speeches as the Lord Mayor of London had done, nay, he said the very same things that the Lord Mayor of London had said, and the deuce a cheer the corporation gave him. There was only one man in the party who was thoroughly awake, and he was insolent, and called him Nick. Nick! What would be the consequence, thought Nicholas, of anybody presuming to call the Lord Mayor of London "Nick!" He should like to know what the sword-bearer would say to that; or the recorder, or the toastmaster, or any other of the great officers of the city. They 'd nick him!

But these were not the worst of Nicholas Tulrumble's doings. If they had been, he might have remained a Mayor to this day, and have talked till he lost his voice. He contracted a relish for statistics, and got philosophical; and the statistics and the philosophy together led him into an act which increased his unpopularity and hastened his downfall.

At the very end of the Mudfog High Street, and abutting on the river-side, stands the Jolly Boatmen, an old-fashioned, low-roofed, bay-windowed house, with a bar, kitchen, and tap-room all in one, and a large fireplace with a kettle to correspond, round which the working men have congregated time out of mind on a winter's night, refreshed by draughts of good strong beer, and cheered by the sounds of a fiddle and tambourine—the Jolly Boatmen having been duly licensed by the Mayor and corporation to scrape the fiddle and thumb the tambourine from time whereof the memory of the oldest inhabitants goeth not to the contrary. Now, Nicholas Tulrumble had been reading pamphlets on crime and parliamentary reports—or had made the secretary read them to him, which is the same thing in effect—and he at once perceived that this fiddle and tambourine must have done more to demoralize Mudfog than any other operating causes that ingenuity could imagine. So he read up for the subject, and determined to come out on the corporation with a burst the very next time the licence was applied for.

The licensing day came, and the red-faced landlord of the Jolly Boatmen walked into the town hall, looking as jolly as need be, having actually put on an extra fiddle for that night, to commemorate the anniversary of the Jolly Boatmen's music licence. It was applied for in due form, and was just about to be granted as a matter of course, when up rose Nicholas Tulrumble, and drowned the astonished corporation in a torrent of eloquence. He descanted in glowing terms upon the increasing depravity of his native town of Mudfog, and the excesses committed by its population. Then he related how shocked he had been, to see barrels of beer sliding down into the cellar of the Jolly Boatmen week after week; and how he had sat at a window opposite the Jolly Boatmen for two days together, to count the people who went in for beer between the hours of twelve and one o'clock alone—which, by-the-bye, was the time at which the great majority of the Mudfog people dined. Then he went on to state, how the number of people who came out with beer-jugs averaged twenty-one in five minutes, which, being multiplied by twelve, gave two hundred and fifty-two people with beer-jugs in an hour, and multiplied again by fifteen (the number of hours during which the house was open daily) yielded three thousand seven hundred and eighty people with beer-jugs per day, or twenty-six thousand four hundred and sixty people with

beer-jugs per week. Then he proceeded to show that a tambourine and moral degradation were synonymous terms, and a fiddle and vicious propensities wholly inseparable. All these arguments he strengthened and demonstrated by frequent references to a large book with a blue cover, and sundry quotations from the Middlesex magistrates; and in the end, the corporation, who were posed with the figures, and sleepy with the speech, and sadly in want of dinner into the bargain, yielded the palm to Nicholas Tulrumble, and refused the music licence to the Jolly Boatmen.

But although Nicholas triumphed, his triumph was short. He carried on the war against beer-jugs and fiddles, forgetting the time when he was glad to drink out of the one, and to dance to the other, till the people hated and his old friends shunned him. He grew tired of the lonely magnificence of Mudfog Hall, and his heart yearned towards the Lighterman's Arms. He wished he had never set up as a public man, and sighed for the good old times of the coal-shop and the chimney corner.

At length old Nicholas, being thoroughly miserable, took heart of grace, paid the secretary a quarter's wages in advance, and packed him off to London by the next coach. Having taken this step, he put his hat on his head and his pride in his pocket, and walked down to the old room at the Lighterman's Arms. There were only two of the old fellows there, and they looked coldly on Nicholas as he proffered his hand.

"Are you going to put down pipes, Mr. Tulrumble?" said one.

"Or trace the progress of crime to 'bacca?" growled another.

"Neither," replied Nicholas Tulrumble, shaking hands with them both, whether they would or not. "I've come down to say that I'm very sorry for having made a fool of myself, and that I hope you'll give me up the old chair again."

The old fellows opened their eyes, and three or four more old fellows opened the door, to whom Nicholas, with tears in his eyes, thrust out his hand too, and told the same story. They raised a shout of joy, that made the bells in the ancient church tower vibrate again, and wheeling the old chair into the warm corner, thrust old Nicholas down into it, and ordered in the very largest-sized bowl of hot punch, with an unlimited number of pipes, directly.

The next day, the Jolly Boatmen got the licence, and the next night, old Nicholas and Ned Twigger's wife led off a dance to the music of the fiddle and tambourine, the tone of which seemed mightily improved by a little rest, for they never had played so merrily before. Ned Twigger was in the very height of his glory, and he danced hornpipes, and balanced chairs on his chin, and straws on his nose, till the whole company, including the corporation, were in raptures of admiration at the brilliancy of his acquirements.

Mr. Tulrumble, junior, couldn't make up his mind to be anything but magnificent, so he went up to London and drew bills on his father; and when he had overdrawn, and got into debt, he grew penitent, and came home again.

As to old Nicholas, he kept his word, and having had six weeks of public life, never tried it any more. He went to sleep in the town hall at the very next meeting; and, in full proof of his sincerity, has requested us to write this faithful narrative. We wish it could have the effect of reminding the Tulrumbles of another sphere, that puffed-up conceit is not dignity, and that snarling at the little pleasures they were once glad to enjoy, because they would rather forget the times when they were of lower station, renders them objects of contempt and ridicule.

This is the first time we have published any of our gleanings from this particular source. Perhaps, at some future period, we may venture to open the chronicles of Mudfog.

THE PANTOMIME OF LIFE

BEFORE we plunge headlong into this paper, let us at once confess to a fondness for pantomimes—to a gentle sympathy with clowns and pantaloons—to an unqualified admiration of harlequins and columbines—to a chaste delight in every action of their brief existence, varied and many-coloured as those actions are, and inconsistent though they occasionally be with those rigid and formal rules of propriety which regulate the proceedings of meaner and less comprehensive minds. We revel in pantomimes—not because they dazzle one's eyes with tinsel and gold leaf; not because they present to us, once again, the well-beloved chalked faces and goggle eyes of our childhood; not even because, like Christmas Day and Twelfth Night, and Shrove Tuesday, and one's own birthday, they come to us but once a year;—our attachment is founded on a graver and a very different reason. A pantomime is to us a mirror of life; nay, more, we maintain that it is so to audiences generally, although they are not aware of it, and that this very circumstance is the secret cause of their amusement and delight.

Let us take a slight example. The scene is a street: an elderly gentleman, with a large face and strongly marked features, appears. His countenance beams with a sunny smile, and a perpetual dimple is on his broad red cheek. He is evidently an opulent elderly gentleman, comfortable in circumstances, and well-to-do in the world. He is not unmindful of the adornment of his person, for he is richly, not to say gaudily, dressed; and that he indulges to a reasonable extent in the pleasures of the table may be inferred from the joyous and oily manner in which he rubs his stomach, by way of informing the audience that he is going home to dinner. In the fulness of his heart, in the fancied security of wealth, in the possession and enjoyment of all the good things of life, the elderly gentleman suddenly loses his footing, and stumbles. How the audience roar! He is set upon by a noisy and officious crowd, who buffet and cuff him unmercifully. They scream with delight! Every time the elderly gentleman struggles to get up, his relentless persecutors knock him down again. The spectators are convulsed with merriment! And when at last the elderly gentleman does get up, and staggers away, despoiled of hat, wig, and clothing, himself battered to pieces, and his watch and money gone, they are exhausted with laughter, and express their merriment and admiration in rounds of applause.

Is this like life? Change the scene to any real street;—to the Stock Exchange, or the city banker's, the merchant's counting-house, or even the tradesman's shop. See any one of these men fall,—the more suddenly, and the nearer the zenith of his pride and riches, the better. What a wild hallo is raised over his prostrate carcase by the shouting mob; how they whoop and yell as he lies humbled beneath them! Mark how eagerly they set upon him when he is down, and how they mock and deride him as he slinks away. Why, it is the pantomime to the very letter.

Of all the pantomimic *dramatis personæ*, we consider the pantaloon the most worthless and debauched. Independent of the dislike one naturally feels at seeing a gentleman of his years engaged in pursuits highly unbecoming his gravity and time of life, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that he is a treacherous, worldly-minded old villain, constantly enticing his younger companion, the clown, into acts of fraud or petty larceny, and generally standing aside to watch the result of the enterprise. If it be successful, he never forgets to return for his share of the spoil; but if it turn out a failure, he generally retires with remarkable caution and expedition, and keeps carefully aloof until the affair has blown over. His amorous propensities, too, are eminently disagreeable; and his mode of addressing ladies in the open street at noon-day is downright improper, being usually neither more nor less than a perceptible tickling of the aforesaid ladies in the waist, after committing which, he starts back, manifestly ashamed (as well he may be) of his own indecorum and temerity; continuing, nevertheless, to ogle and beckon to them from a distance in a very unpleasant and immoral manner.

Is there any man who cannot count a dozen pantaloons in his own social circle? Is there any man who has not seen them swarming at the west end of the town on a sunshiny day or a summer's evening, going through the last-named pantomimic feats with as much liquorish energy, and as total an absence of reserve, as if they were on the very stage itself? We can tell upon our fingers a dozen pantaloons of our acquaintance at this moment—capital pantaloons, who have been performing all kinds of strange freaks, to the great amusement of their

friends and acquaintance, for years past; and who to this day are making such comical and ineffectual attempts to be young and dissolute, that all beholders are like to die with laughter.

Take that old gentleman who has just emerged from the Café de l'Europe in the Haymarket, where he has been dining at the expense of the young man upon town with whom he shakes hands as they part at the door of the tavern. The affected warmth of that shake of the hand, the courteous nod, the obvious recollection of the dinner, the savoury flavour of which still hangs upon his lips, are all characteristics of his great prototype. He hobbles away humming an opera tune, and twirling his cane to and fro, with affected carelessness. Suddenly he stops—'t is at the milliner's window. He peeps through one of the large panes of glass; and, his view of the ladies within being obstructed by the India shawls, directs his attentions to the young girl with the bandbox in her hand, who is gazing in at the window also. See! he draws beside her. He coughs; she turns away from him. He draws near her again; she disregards him. He gleefully chucks her under the chin, and, retreating a few steps, nods and beckons with fantastic grimaces, while the girl bestows a contemptuous and supercilious look upon his wrinkled visage. She turns away with a flounce, and the old gentleman trots after her with a toothless chuckle. The pantaloon to the life!

But the close resemblance which the clowns of the stage bear to those of every-day life is perfectly extraordinary. Some people talk with a sigh of the decline of pantomime, and murmur in low and dismal tones the name of Grimaldi. We mean no disparagement to the worthy and excellent old man when we say that this is downright nonsense. Clowns that beat Grimaldi all to nothing turn up every day, and nobody patronizes them—more's the pity!

"I know who you mean," says some dirty-faced patron of Mr. Osbaldistone's, laying down the Miscellany when he has got thus far, and bestowing upon vacancy a most knowing glance; "you mean C. J. Smith as did Guy Fawkes and George Barnwell at the Garden." The dirty-faced gentleman has hardly uttered the words, when he is interrupted by a young gentleman in no shirt-collar and a Petersham coat. "No, no," says the young gentleman; "he means Brown, King, and Gibson, at the 'Delphi." Now, with great deference both to the first-named gentleman with the dirty face, and the last-named gentleman in the non-existing shirt-collar, we do *not* mean either the performer who so grotesquely burlesqued the Popish conspirator, or the three unchangeables who have been dancing the same dance under different imposing titles, and doing the same thing under various high-sounding names for some five or six years last past. We have no sooner made this avowal than the public, who have hitherto been silent witnesses of the dispute, inquire what on earth it is we *do* mean; and, with becoming respect, we proceed to tell them.

It is very well known to all playgoers and pantomime-seers, that the scenes in which a theatrical clown is at the very height of his glory are those which are described in the playbills as "Cheesemonger's shop and Crockery warehouse," or "Tailor's shop and Mrs. Queertable's boarding-house," or places bearing some such title, where the great fun of the thing consists in the hero's taking lodgings which he has not the slightest intention of paying for, or obtaining goods under false pretences, or abstracting the stock-in-trade of the respectable shopkeeper next door, or robbing warehouse porters as they pass under his window, or, to shorten the catalogue, in his swindling everybody he possibly can, it only remaining to be observed that, the more extensive the swindling is, and the more barefaced the impudence of the swindler, the greater the rapture and ecstacy of the audience. Now, it is a most remarkable fact that precisely this sort of thing occurs in real life day after day, and nobody sees the humour of it. Let us illustrate our position by detailing the plot of this portion of the pantomime—not of the theatre, but of life.

The Honourable Captain Fitz-Whisker Fiercy, attended by his livery servant Do'em—a most respectable servant to look at, who has grown grey in the service of the captain's family—views, treats for, and ultimately obtains possession of, the unfurnished house, such a number, such a street. All the tradesmen in the neighbourhood are in agonies of competition for the captain's custom; the captain is a good-natured, kind-hearted, easy man, and, to avoid being the cause of disappointment to any, he most handsomely gives orders to all. Hampers of wine, baskets of provisions, cartloads of furniture, boxes of jewellery, supplies of luxuries of the costliest description, flock to the house of the Honourable Captain Fitz-Whisker Fiercy, where they are received with the utmost readiness by the highly respectable Do'em; while the captain himself struts and swaggers about with that compound air of conscious superiority and general bloodthirstiness which a military captain should always, and does most times, wear, to the admiration and terror of plebeian men. But the tradesmen's backs are no sooner turned, than the captain, with all the eccentricity of a mighty mind, and assisted by the faithful Do'em, whose devoted fidelity is not the least touching part of his character, disposes of everything to great advantage; for, although the articles fetch small sums, still they are sold considerably above cost price, the cost to the captain having

been nothing at all. After various manœuvres, the imposture is discovered, Fitz-Whisker Fiercy and Do'em are recognized as confederates, and the police office to which they are both taken is thronged with their dupes.

Who can fail to recognize in this, the exact counterpart of the best portion of a theatrical pantomime — Fitz-Whisker Fiercy by the clown; Do'em by the pantaloon; and supernumeraries by the tradesmen? The best of the joke, too, is, that the very coal merchant who is loudest in his complaints against the person who defrauded him is the identical man who sat in the centre of the very front row of the pit last night and laughed the most boisterously at this very same thing,—and not so well done either. Talk of Grimaldi, we say again! Did Grimaldi, in his best days, ever do anything in this way equal to Da Costa?

The mention of this latter justly celebrated clown reminds us of his last piece of humour, the fraudulently obtaining certain stamped acceptances from a young gentleman in the army. We had scarcely laid down our pen to contemplate for a few moments this admirable actor's performance of that exquisite practical joke, than a new branch of our subject flashed suddenly upon us. So we take it up again at once.

All people who have been behind the scenes, and most people who have been before them, know, that in the representation of a pantomime, a good many men are sent upon the stage for the express purpose of being cheated, or knocked down, or both. Now, down to a moment ago, we had never been able to understand for what possible purpose a great number of odd, lazy, large-headed men, whom one is in the habit of meeting here, and there, and everywhere, could ever have been created. We see it all now. They are the supernumeraries in the pantomime of life; the men who have been thrust into it, with no other view than to be constantly tumbling over each other, and running their heads against all sorts of strange things. We sat opposite to one of these men at a supper-table only last week. Now we think of it, he was exactly like the gentlemen with the pasteboard heads and faces, who do the corresponding business in the theatrical pantomimes: there was the same broad stolid simper—the same dull leaden eye—the same unmeaning, vacant stare; and whatever was said, or whatever was done, he always came in at precisely the wrong place, or jostled against something that he had not the slightest business with. We looked at the man across the table again and again, and could not satisfy ourselves what race of beings to class him with. How very odd that this never occurred to us before!

We will frankly own that we have been much troubled with the harlequin. We see harlequins of so many kinds in the real living pantomime, that we hardly know which to select as the proper fellow of him of the theatres. At one time we were disposed to think that the harlequin was neither more nor less than a young man of family and independent property, who had run away with an opera dancer, and was fooling his life and his means away in light and trivial amusements. On reflection, however, we remembered that harlequins are occasionally guilty of witty and even clever acts, and we are rather disposed to acquit our young men of family and independent property, generally speaking, of any such misdemeanours. On a more mature consideration of the subject, we have arrived at the conclusion that the harlequins of life are just ordinary men, to be found in no particular walk or degree, on whom a certain station, or particular conjunction of circumstances, confers the magic wand. And this brings us to a few words on the pantomime of public and political life, which we shall say at once, and then conclude—merely premising in this place that we decline any reference whatever to the columbine, being in no wise satisfied of the nature of her connection with her parti-coloured lover, and not feeling by any means clear that we should be justified in introducing her to the virtuous and respectable ladies who peruse our lucubrations.

We take it that the commencement of a session of Parliament is neither more nor less than the drawing up of the curtain for a grand comic pantomime, and that his Majesty's most gracious speech on the opening thereof may be not inaptly compared to the clown's opening speech of "Here we are!" "My lords and gentlemen, here we are!" appears, to our mind at least, to be a very good abstract of the point and meaning of the propitiatory address of the Ministry. When we remember how frequently this speech is made, immediately after *the change* too, the parallel is quite perfect, and still more singular.

Perhaps the cast of our political pantomime never was richer than at this day. We are particularly strong in clowns. At no former time, we should say, have we had such astonishing tumblers, or performers, so ready to go through the whole of their feats for the amusement of an admiring throng. Their extreme readiness to exhibit, indeed, has given rise to some ill-natured reflections; it having been objected that by exhibiting gratuitously through the country when the theatre is closed, they reduce themselves to the level of mountebanks, and thereby tend to degrade the respectability of the profession. Certainly Grimaldi never did this sort of thing; and though Brown, King, and Gibson have gone to the Surrey in vacation-time, and Mr. C. J. Smith has ruralized at Sadler's Wells, we find no theatrical precedent for a general tumbling through the country, except in the gentleman,

name unknown, who threw summersets on behalf of the late Mr. Richardson, and who is no authority either, because he had never been on the regular boards.

But, laying aside this question, which after all is a mere matter of taste, we may reflect with pride and gratification of heart on the proficiency of our clowns as exhibited in the season. Night after night will they twist and tumble about, till two, three, and four o'clock in the morning; playing the strangest antics, and giving each other the funniest slaps on the face, that can possibly be imagined, without evincing the smallest tokens of fatigue. The strange noises, the confusion, the shouting and roaring, amid which all this is done, too, would put to shame the most turbulent sixpenny gallery that ever yelled through a Boxing Night.

It is especially curious to behold one of these clowns compelled to go through the most surprising contortions by the irresistible influence of the wand of office, which his leader or harlequin holds above his head. Acted upon by this wonderful charm, he will become perfectly motionless, moving neither hand, foot, nor finger, and will even lose the faculty of speech at an instant's notice; or on the other hand, he will become all life and animation if required, pouring forth a torrent of words without sense or meaning, throwing himself into the wildest and most fantastic contortions, and even grovelling on the earth and licking up the dust. These exhibitions are more curious than pleasing; indeed, they are rather disgusting than otherwise, except to the admirers of such things, with whom we confess we have no fellow-feeling.

Strange tricks—very strange tricks—are also performed by the harlequin who holds for the time being the magic wand which we have just mentioned. The mere waving it before a man's eyes will dispossess his brains of all the notions previously stored there, and fill it with an entirely new set of ideas; one gentle tap on the back will alter the colour of a man's coat completely; and there are some expert performers, who, having this wand held first on one side and then on the other, will change from side to side, turning their coats at every evolution, with so much rapidity and dexterity, that the quickest eye can scarcely detect their motions. Occasionally, the genius who confers the wand wrests it from the hand of the temporary possessor, and consigns it to some new performer; on which occasions all the characters change sides, and then the race and the hard knocks begin anew.

We might have extended this chapter to a much greater length—we might have carried the comparison into the liberal professions—we might have shown, as was in fact our original purpose, that each is in itself a little pantomime with scenes and characters of its own, complete; but, as we fear we have been quite lengthy enough already, we shall leave this chapter just where it is. A gentleman, not altogether unknown as a dramatic poet, wrote thus a year or two ago—

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;"

and we, tracking out his footsteps at the scarcely-worth-mentioning little distance of a few millions of leagues behind, venture to add, by way of new reading, that he meant a Pantomime and that we are all actors in The Pantomime of Life.

SOME PARTICULARS CONCERNING A LION.

We have a great respect for lions in the abstract. In common with most other people, we have heard and read of many instances of their bravery and generosity. We have duly admired that heroic self-denial and charming philanthropy which prompts them never to eat people except when they are hungry, and we have been deeply impressed with a becoming sense of the politeness they are said to display towards unmarried ladies of a certain state. All natural histories teem with anecdotes illustrative of their excellent qualities; and one old spelling-book in particular recounts a touching instance of an old lion, of high moral dignity and stern principle, who felt it his imperative duty to devour a young man who had contracted a habit of swearing, as a striking example to the rising generation.

All this is extremely pleasant to reflect upon, and, indeed, says a very great deal in favour of lions as a mass. We are bound to state, however, that such individual lions as we have happened to fall in with have not put forth any very striking characteristics, and have not acted up to the chivalrous character assigned them by their chroniclers. We never saw a lion in what is called his natural state, certainly; that is to say, we have never met a lion out walking in a forest, or crouching in his lair under a tropical sun, waiting till his dinner should happen to come by, hot from the baker's. But we have seen some under the influence of captivity and the pressure of misfortune; and we must say that they appeared to us very apathetic, heavy-headed fellows.

The lion at the Zoological Gardens, for instance. He is all very well; he has an undeniable mane, and looks very fierce; but, Lord bless us! what of that? The lions of the fashionable world look just as ferocious, and are the most harmless creatures breathing. A box-lobby lion or a Regent Street animal will put on a most terrible aspect, and roar fearfully, if you affront him; but he will never bite, and, if you offer to attack him manfully, will fairly turn tail and sneak off. Doubtless these creatures roam about sometimes in herds, and, if they meet any especially meek-looking and peaceably disposed fellow, will endeavour to frighten him; but the faintest show of a vigorous resistance is sufficient to scare them even then. These are pleasant characteristics, whereas we make it matter of distinct charge against the Zoological lion and his brethren at the fairs, that they are sleepy, dreamy, sluggish quadrupeds.

We do not remember to have ever seen one of them perfectly awake, except at feeding-time. In every respect we uphold the biped lions against their four-footed namesakes, and we boldly challenge controversy upon the subject.

With these opinions it may be easily imagined that our curiosity and interest were very much excited the other day, when a lady of our acquaintance called on us and resolutely declined to accept our refusal of her invitation to an evening party; "for," said she, "I have got a lion coming." We at once retracted our plea of a prior engagement, and became as anxious to go as we had previously been to stay away.

We went early, and posted ourselves in an eligible part of the drawing-room, from whence we could hope to obtain a full view of the interesting animal. Two or three hours passed, the quadrilles began, the room filled; but no lion appeared. The lady of the house became inconsolable,—for it is one of the peculiar privileges of these lions to make solemn appointments and never keep them,—when all of a sudden there came a tremendous double rap at the street door, and the master of the house, after gliding out (unobserved, as he flattered himself) to peep over the banisters, came into the room, rubbing his hands together with great glee, and cried out in a very important voice, "My dear, Mr.——" (naming the lion) "has this moment arrived."

Upon this, all eyes were turned towards the door, and we observed several young ladies, who had been laughing and conversing previously with great gaiety and good-humour, grow extremely quiet and sentimental; while some young gentlemen, who had been cutting great figures in the facetious and small-talk way, suddenly sank very obviously in the estimation of the company, and were looked upon with great coldness and indifference. Even the young man who had been ordered from the music-shop to play the pianoforte was visibly affected, and struck several false notes in the excess of his excitement.

All this time there was a great talking outside, more than once accompanied by a loud laugh, and a cry of "Oh! capital! excellent!" from which we inferred that the lion was jocose, and that these exclamations were occasioned by the transports of his keeper and our host. Nor were we deceived; for when the lion at last appeared, we overheard his keeper, who was a little prim man, whisper to several gentlemen of his acquaintance, with uplifted hands, and every expression of half-suppressed admiration, that —— (naming the lion again) was in *such* cue to-night!

The lion was a literary one. Of course there was a vast number of people present who had admired his roarings, and were anxious to be introduced to him; and very pleasant it was to see them brought up for the purpose, and to observe the patient dignity with which he received all their patting and caressing. This brought forcibly to our mind what we had so often witnessed at country fairs, where the other lions are compelled to go through as many forms of courtesy as they chance to be acquainted with, just as often as admiring parties happen to drop in upon them.

While the lion was exhibiting in this way, his keeper was not idle, for he mingled among the crowd, and spread his praises most industriously. To one gentleman he whispered some very choice thing that the noble animal had said in the very act of coming upstairs, which, of course, rendered the mental effort still more astonishing; to another he murmured a hasty account of a grand dinner that had taken place the day before, where twenty-seven gentlemen had got up all at once to demand an extra cheer for the lion; and to the ladies he made sundry promises of interceding to procure the majestic brute's sign-manual for their albums. Then there were little private consultations in different corners, relative to the personal appearance and stature of the lion; whether he was shorter than they had expected to see him, or taller, or thinner, or fatter, or younger, or older; whether he was like his portrait, or unlike it; and whether the particular shade of his eyes was black, or blue, or hazel, or green, or yellow, or mixture. At all these consultations the keeper assisted; and, in short, the lion was the sole and single subject of discussion till they sat him down to whist, and then the people relapsed into their old topics of conversation—themselves and each other.

We must confess that we looked forward with no slight impatience to the announcement of supper; for if you wish to see a tame lion under particularly favourable circumstances, feeding-time is the period of all others to pitch upon. We were therefore very much delighted to observe a sensation among the guests, which we well knew how to interpret, and immediately afterwards to behold the lion escorting the lady of the house downstairs. We offered our arm to an elderly female of our acquaintance, who—dear old soul!—is the very best person that ever lived to lead down to any meal; for, be the room ever so small, or the party ever so large, she is sure, by some intuitive perception of the eligible, to push and pull herself and conductor close to the best dishes on the table; —we say we offered our arm to this elderly female, and, descending the stairs shortly after the lion, were fortunate enough to obtain a seat nearly opposite him.

Of course the keeper was there already. He had planted himself at precisely that distance from his charge which afforded him a decent pretext for raising his voice, when he addressed him, to so loud a key, as could not fail to attract the attention of the whole company, and immediately began to apply himself seriously to the task of bringing the lion out, and putting him through the whole of his manœuvres. Such flashes of wit as he elicited from the lion! First of all, they began to make puns upon a salt-cellar, and then upon the breast of a fowl, and then upon the trifle; but the best jokes of all were decidedly on the lobster salad, upon which latter subject the lion came out most vigorously, and, in the opinion of the most competent authorities, quite outshone himself. This is a very excellent mode of shining in society, and is founded, we humbly conceive, upon the classic model of the dialogues between Mr. Punch and his friend the proprietor, wherein the latter takes all the uphill work and is content to be pioneer to the jokes and repartees of Mr. P. himself, who never fails to gain great credit and excite much laughter thereby. Whatever it be founded on, however, we recommend it to all lions, present and to come; for in this instance it succeeded to admiration, and perfectly dazzled the whole body of hearers.

When the salt-cellar, and the fowl's breast, and the trifle, and the lobster salad were all exhausted, and could not afford standing-room for another solitary witticism, the keeper performed that very dangerous feat which is still done with some of the caravan lions, although in one instance it terminated fatally, of putting his head in the animal's mouth, and placing himself entirely at his mercy. Boswell frequently presents a melancholy instance of the lamentable results of this achievement, and other keepers and jackals have been terribly lacerated for their daring. It is due to our lion to state, that he condescended to be trifled with in the most gentle manner, and finally went home with the showman in a hack cab: perfectly peaceable, but slightly fuddled.

Being in a contemplative mood, we were led to make some reflections upon the character and conduct of this genus of lions as

we walked homewards, and we were not long in arriving at the conclusion that our former impression in their favour was very much strengthened and confirmed by what we had recently seen. While the other lions receive company and compliments in a sullen, moody, not to say snarling manner, these appear flattered by the attentions that are paid them; while those conceal themselves to the utmost of their power from the vulgar gaze, these court the popular eye, and, unlike their brethren, whom nothing short of compulsion will move to exertion, are ever ready to display their acquirements to the wondering throng.

We have known bears of undoubted ability who, when the expectations of a large audience have been wound up to the utmost pitch, have peremptorily refused to dance; well-taught monkeys, who have unaccountably objected to exhibit on the slack wire; and elephants of unquestioned genius, who have suddenly declined to turn the barrel-organ; but we never once knew or heard of a biped lion, literary or otherwise,—and we state it as a fact which is highly creditable to the whole species,—who, occasion offering, did not seize with avidity on any opportunity which was afforded him of performing to his heart's content on the first violin.

FULL REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERYTHING.

WE have made the most unparalleled and extraordinary exertions to place before our readers a complete and accurate account of the proceedings at the late grand meeting of the Mudfog Association, holden in the town of Mudfog; it affords us great happiness to lay the result before them, in the shape of various communications received from our able, talented, and graphic correspondent, expressly sent down for the purpose, who has immortalized us, himself, Mudfog, and the association, all at one and the same time. We have been, indeed, for some days unable to determine who will transmit the greatest name to posterity: ourselves, who sent our correspondent down; our correspondent, who wrote an account of the matter; or the association, who gave our correspondent something to write about. We rather incline to the opinion that we are the greatest man of the party, inasmuch as the notion of an exclusive and authentic report originated with us: this may be prejudice; it may arise from a prepossession on our part in our own favour. Be it so. We have no doubt that every gentleman concerned in this mighty assemblage is troubled with the same complaint in a greater or less degree; and it is a consolation to us to know that we have at least this feeling in common with the great scientific stars, the brilliant and extraordinary luminaries, whose speculations we record.

We give our correspondent's letters in the order in which they reached us. Any attempt at amalgamating them into one beautiful whole would only destroy that glowing tone, that dash of wildness, and rich vein of picturesque interest, which pervade them throughout.

"*Mudfog, Monday night, seven o'clock.*

"WE are in a state of great excitement here. Nothing is spoken of but the approaching meeting of the association. The inn-doors are thronged with waiters anxiously looking for the expected arrivals; and the numerous bills which are wafered up in the windows of private houses, intimating that there are beds to let within, give the streets a very animated and cheerful appearance, the wafers being of a great variety of colours, and the monotony of printed inscriptions being relieved by every possible size and style of handwriting. It is confidently rumoured that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy have engaged three beds and a sitting-room at the Pig and Tinder-Box. I give you the rumour as it has reached me; but I cannot, as yet, vouch for its accuracy. The moment I have been enabled to obtain any certain information upon this interesting point, you may depend upon receiving it.

"*Half-past seven.*

"I HAVE just returned from a personal interview with the landlord of the Pig and Tinder-Box. He speaks confidently of the probability of Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy taking up their residence at his house during the sitting of the association, but denies that the beds have been yet engaged; in which representation he is confirmed by the chambermaid—a girl of artless manners and interesting appearance. The boots denies that it is at all likely that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will put up here; but I have reason to believe that this man has been suborned by the proprietor of the Original Pig, which is the opposition hotel. Amidst such conflicting testimony it is difficult to arrive at the real truth; but you may depend upon receiving authentic information upon this point the moment the fact is ascertained. The excitement still continues. A boy fell through the window of the pastrycook's shop at the corner of the High Street about half an hour ago, which has occasioned much confusion. The general impression is that it was an accident. Pray Heaven it may prove so!"

"*Tuesday, noon.*

"AT an early hour this morning the bells of all the churches struck seven o'clock; the effect of which, in the present lively state of the town, was extremely singular. While I was at breakfast, a yellow gig, drawn by a dark grey horse, with a patch of white over his right eyelid, proceeded at a rapid pace in the direction of the Original Pig stables; it is currently reported that this gentleman has arrived here for the purpose of attending the association, and, from what I have heard, I consider it extremely probable, although no-

thing decisive is yet known regarding him. You may conceive the anxiety with which we are all looking forward to the arrival of the four o'clock coach this afternoon.

"Notwithstanding the excited state of the populace, no outrage has yet been committed, owing to the admirable discipline and discretion of the police, who are nowhere to be seen. A barrel-organ is playing opposite my window, and groups of people, offering fish and vegetables for sale, parade the streets. With these exceptions everything is quiet, and I trust will continue so."

"*Five o'clock.*

"IT is now ascertained, beyond all doubt, that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will *not* repair to the Pig and Tinder-Box, but have actually engaged apartments at the Original Pig. This intelligence is *exclusive;* and I leave you and your readers to draw their own inferences from it. Why Professor Wheezy, of all people in the world, should repair to the Original Pig in preference to the Pig and Tinder-Box, it is not easy to conceive. The professor is a man who should be above all such petty feelings. Some people here openly impute treachery and a distinct breach of faith to Professors Snore and Doze; while others, again, are disposed to acquit them of any culpability in the transaction, and to insinuate that the blame rests solely with Professor Wheezy. I own that I incline to the latter opinion; and although it gives me great pain to speak in terms of censure or disapprobation of a man of such transcendent genius and acquirements, still I am bound to say that, if my suspicions be well founded, and if all the reports which have reached my ears be true, I really do not well know what to make of the matter.

"Mr. Slug, so celebrated for his sta ical researches, arrived this afternoon by the four o'clock stage. His complexion is a dark purple, and he has a habit of sighing constantly. He looked extremely well, and appeared in high health and spirits. Mr. Woodensconse also came down in the same conveyance. The distinguished gentleman was fast asleep on his arrival, and I am informed by the guard that he had been so the whole way. He was, no doubt, preparing for his approaching fatigues; but what gigantic visions must those be that flit through the brain of such a man when his body is in a state of torpidity!

"The influx of visitors increases every moment. I am told (I know not how truly) that two post-chaises have arrived at the Original Pig within the last half-hour, and I myself observed a wheelbarrow, containing three carpet bags and a bundle, entering the yard of the Pig and Tinder-Box no longe ago than five minutes since. The people are still quietly pursuing their ordinary occupations; but there is a wildness in their eyes, and an unwonted rigidity in the muscles of their countenances, which shows to the observant spectator that their expectations are strained to the very utmost pitch. I fear, unless some very extraordinary arrivals take place to-night, that consequences may arise from this popular ferment which every man of sense and feeling would deplore."

"*Twenty minutes past six.*

"I HAVE just heard that the boy who fell through the pastrycook's window last night has died of the fright. He was suddenly called upon to pay three and sixpence for the damage done, and his constitution, it seems, was not strong enough to bear up against the shock. The inquest, it is said, will be held to-morrow."

"*Three-quarters past seven.*

"PROFESSORS MUFF and NOGO have just driven up to the hotel door; they at once ordered dinner with great condescension. We are all very much delighted with the urbanity of their manners, and the ease with which they adapt themselves to the forms and ceremonies of ordinary life. Immediately on their arrival they sent for the head waiter, and privately requested him to purchase a live dog,—as cheap a one as he could meet with,—and to send him up after dinner, with a pie-board, a knife and fork, and a clean plate. It is conjectured that some experiments will be tried upon the dog to-night; if any particulars should transpire, I will forward them by express."

"*Half-past eight.*

"THE animal has been procured. He is a pug-dog, of rather intelligent appearance, in good condition, and with very short legs. He has been tied to a curtain-peg in a dark room, and is howling dreadfully."

"*Ten minutes to nine.*

"THE dog has just been rung for. With an instinct which would appear almost the result of reason, the sagacious animal seized the waiter by the calf of the leg when he approached to take him, and made a desperate though ineffectual resistance. I have not been able to procure admission to the apartment occupied by the scientific gentlemen; but, judging rom the sounds which reached my ears when I stood upon the landing-place outside the door just now, I should be disposed to say that the dog had retreated growling beneath some article of furniture, and was keeping the professors at bay. This conjecture is confirmed by the testimony of the ostler, who, after peeping through the keyhole, assures me that he distinctly saw Professor Nogo on his knees, holding forth a small bottle of prussic acid, to which the

animal, who was crouched beneath an arm-chair, obstinately declined to smell. You cannot imagine the feverish state of irritation we are in, lest the interests of science should be sacrificed to the prejudices of a brute creature, who is not endowed with sufficient sense to foresee the incalculable benefits which the whole human race may derive from so very slight a concession on his part."

"*Nine o'clock.*

"THE dog's tail and ears have been sent downstairs to be washed; from which circumstance we infer that the animal is no more. His forelegs have been delivered to the boots to be brushed, which strengthens the supposition."

"*Half after ten.*

"MY feelings are so overpowered by what has taken place in the course of the last hour and a half, that I have scarcely strength to detail the rapid succession of events which have quite bewildered all those who are cognizant of their occurrence. It appears that the pug-dog mentioned in my last was surreptitiously obtained,—stolen, in fact,—by some person attached to the stable department, from an unmarried lady resident in this town. Frantic on discovering the loss of her favourite, the lady rushed distractedly into the street, calling in the most heartrending and pathetic manner upon the passengers to restore her her Augustus,—for so the deceased was named, in affectionate remembrance of a former lover of his mistress, to whom he bore a striking personal resemblance, which renders the circumstances additionally affecting. I am not yet in a condition to inform you what circumstance induced the bereaved lady to direct her steps to the hotel which had witnessed the last struggles of her *protégé*. I can only state that she arrived there at the very instant when his detached members were passing through the passage on a small tray. Her shrieks still reverberate in my ears! I grieve to say that the expressive features of Professor Muff were much scratched and lacerated by the injured lady; and that Professor Nogo, besides sustaining several severe bites, has lost some handfuls of hair from the same cause. It must be some consolation to these gentlemen to know that their ardent attachment to scientific pursuits has alone occasioned these unpleasant consequences; for which the sympathy of a grateful country will sufficiently reward them. The unfortunate lady remains at the Pig and Tinder-Box, and up to this time is reported in a very precarious state.

"I need scarcely tell you that this unlooked for catastrophe has cast a damp and gloom upon us in the midst of our exhilaration; natural in any case, but greatly enhanced in this by the amiable qualities of the deceased animal, who appears to have been much and deservedly respected by the whole of his acquaintance."

"*Twelve o'clock.*

"I TAKE the last opportunity before sealing my parcel to inform you that the boy who fell through the pastrycook's window is not dead, as was universally believed, but alive and well. The report appears to have had its origin in his mysterious disappearance. He was found half an hour since on the premises of a sweet-stuff maker, where a raffle had been announced for a second-hand sealskin cap and a tambourine; and where—a sufficient number of members not having been obtained at first—he had patiently waited until the list was completed. This fortunate discovery has in some degree restored our gaiety and cheerfulness. It is proposed to get up a subscription for him without delay.

"Everybody is nervously anxious to see what to-morrow will bring forth. If any one should arrive in the course of the night, I have left strict directions to be called immediately. I should have sat up, indeed, but the agitating events of this day have been too much for me.

"No news yet of either of the Professors Snore, Doze, or Wheezy. It is very strange!"

"*Wednesday afternoon.*

"ALL is now over; and, upon one point at least, I am at length enabled to set the minds of your readers at rest. The three professors arrived at ten minutes after two o'clock, and instead of taking up their quarters at the Original Pig, as it was universally understood in the course of yesterday that they would assuredly have done, drove straight to the Pig and Tinder-Box, where they threw off the mask at once, and openly announced their intention of remaining. Professor Wheezy *may* reconcile this very extraordinary conduct with *his* notions of fair and equitable dealing, but I would recommend Professor Wheezy to be cautious how he presumes too far upon his well-earned reputation. How such a man as Professor Snore, or, which is still more extraordinary, such an individual as Professor Doze, can quietly allow himself to be mixed up with such proceedings as these, you will naturally inquire. Upon this head rumour is silent; I have my speculations, but forbear to give utterance to them just now."

"*Four o'clock.*

"THE town is filling fast; eighteenpence has been offered for a bed and refused. Several gentlemen were under the necessity last night of sleeping in the brickfields, and on the steps of doors, for which they were taken before the magistrates in a body this morning, and committed to prison as vagrants for various terms. One of these persons I understand to be a highly respectable tinker, of great practical skill, who had forwarded a paper to the President of Section D. Mechanical Science, on the

Construction of Pipkins with Copper Bottoms and Safety-Valves, of which report speaks highly. The incarceration of this gentleman is greatly to be regretted, as his absence will preclude any discussion on the subject.

"The bills are being taken down in all directions, and lodgings are being secured on almost any terms. I have heard of fifteen shillings a week for two rooms, exclusive of coals and attendance, but I can scarcely believe it. The excitement is dreadful. I was informed this morning that the civil authorities, apprehensive of some outbreak of popular feeling, had commanded a recruiting sergeant and two corporals to be under arms; and that with the view of not irritating the people unnecessarily by their presence, they had been requested to take up their position before daybreak in a turnpike, distant about a quarter of a mile from the town. The vigour and promptness of these measures cannot be too highly extolled.

"Intelligence has just been brought me, that an elderly female, in a state of inebriety, has declared in the open street her intention to 'do' for Mr. Slug. Some statistical returns compiled by that gentleman, relative to the consumption of raw spirituous liquors in this place, are supposed to be the cause of the wretch's animosity. It is added that this declaration was loudly cheered by a crowd of persons who had assembled on the spot, and that one man had the boldness to designate Mr. Slug aloud by the opprobrious epithet of 'Stick-in-the-mud!' It is earnestly to be hoped that now, when the moment has arrived for their interference, the magistrates will not shrink from the exercise of that power which is vested in them by the constitution of our common country."

"*Half-past ten.*

"THE disturbance, I am happy to inform you, has been completely quelled, and the ringleader taken into custody. She had a pail of cold water thrown over her previous to being locked up, and expresses great contrition and uneasiness. We are all in a fever of anticipation about to-morrow; but, now that we are within a few hours of the meeting of the association, and at last enjoy the proud consciousness of having its illustrious members amongst us, I trust and hope everything may go off peaceably. I shall send you a full report of to-morrow's proceedings by the night coach."

"*Eleven o'clock.*

"I OPEN my letter to say that nothing whatever has occurred since I folded it up."

"*Thursday.*

"THE sun rose this morning at the usual hour. I did not observe anything particular in the aspect of the glorious planet, except that he appeared to me (it might have been a delusion of my heightened fancy) to shine with more than common brilliancy, and to shed a refulgent lustre upon the town, such as I had never observed before. This is the more extraordinary, as the sky was perfectly cloudless, and the atmosphere peculiarly fine. At half-past nine o'clock the general committee assembled, with the last year's president in the chair. The report of the council was read; and one passage, which stated that the council had corresponded with no less than three thousand five hundred and seventy-one persons (all of whom paid their own postage), on no fewer than seven thousand two hundred and forty-three topics, was received with a degree of enthusiasm which no efforts could suppress. The various committees and sections having been appointed, and the more formal business transacted, the great proceedings of the meeting commenced at eleven o'clock precisely. I had the happiness of occupying a most eligible position at that time, in

SECTION A.—ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY.
GREAT ROOM, PIG AND TINDER-BOX.

President—Professor Snore. *Vice Presidents*—Professors Doze and Wheezy.

"The scene at this moment was particularly striking. The sun streamed through the windows of the apartments, and tinted the whole scene with its brilliant rays, bringing out in strong relief the noble visages of the professors and scientific gentlemen, who, some with bald heads, some with red heads, some with brown heads, some with grey heads, some with black heads, some with block heads, presented a *coup d'œil* which no eye-witness will readily forget. In front of these gentlemen were papers and inkstands; and round the room, on elevated benches extending as far as the forms could reach, were assembled a brilliant concourse of those lovely and elegant women for which Mudfog is justly acknowledged to be without a rival in the whole world. The contrast between their fair faces and the dark coats and trousers of the scientific gentlemen I shall never cease to remember while Memory holds her seat.

"Time having been allowed for a slight confusion, occasioned by the falling down of the greater part of the platforms, to subside, the president called on one of the secretaries to read a communication entitled 'Some Remarks on the Industrious Fleas, with Considerations on the Importance of establishing Infant Schools among that numerous class of society; of directing their Industry to Useful and Practical Ends; and of Applying the Surplus Fruits thereof towards providing for them a Comfortable and Respectable Maintenance in their Old Age.'

"The author stated, that, having long turned his attention to the moral and social condition of these interesting animals, he had been induced to visit an exhibition in Regent

Steet, London, commonly known by the designation of 'The Industrious Fleas.' He had there seen many fleas, occupied certainly in various pursuits and avocations, but occupied, he was bound to add, in a manner which no man of well-regulated mind could fail to regard with sorrow and regret. One flea, reduced to the level of a beast of burden, was drawing about a miniature gig, containing a particularly small effigy of his Grace the Duke of Wellington; while another was staggering beneath the weight of a golden model of his great adversary Napoleon Bonaparte. Some, brought up as mountebanks and ballet-dancers, were performing a figure dance (he regretted to observe, that, of the fleas so employed, several were females); others were in training, in a small cardboard box, for pedestrians—mere sporting characters—and two were actually engaged in the cold-blooded and barbarous occupation of duelling, a pursuit from which humanity recoiled with horror and disgust. He suggested that measures should be immediately taken to employ the labour of these fleas as part and parcel of the productive power of the country, which might easily be done by the establishment among them of infant schools and houses of industry, in which a system of virtuous education, based upon sound principles, should be observed, and moral precepts strictly inculcated.

"He proposed that every flea who presumed to exhibit, for hire, music, or dancing, or any species of theatrical entertainment, without a licence, should be considered a vagabond, and treated accordingly; in which respect he only placed him upon a level with the rest of mankind. He would further suggest that their labour should be placed under the control and regulation of the State, who should set apart from the profits a fund for the support of superannuated or disabled fleas, their widows and orphans. With this view, he proposed that liberal premiums should be offered for the three best designs for a general almshouse; from which—as insect architecture was well known to be in a very advanced and perfect state—we might possibly derive many valuable hints for the improvement of our metropolitan universities, national galleries, and other public edifices.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to be informed how the ingenious gentleman proposed to open a communication with fleas generally, in the first instance, so that they might be thoroughly imbued with a sense of the advantages they must necessarily derive from changing their mode of life, and applying themselves to honest labour. This appeared to him the only difficulty.

"THE AUTHOR submitted that this difficulty was easily overcome, or rather that there was no difficulty at all in the case. Obviously the course to be pursued, if Her Majesty's Government could be prevailed upon to take up the plan, would be to secure at a rumunerative salary the individual to whom he had alluded as presiding over the exibition in Regent Street at the period of his visit. That gentleman would at once be able to put himself in communication with the mass of the fleas, and to instruct them in pursuance of some general plan of education, to be sanctioned by Parliament, until such time as the more intelligent among them were advanced enough to officiate as teachers to the rest.

"The President and several members of the section highly complimented the author of the paper last read, on his most ingenious and important treatise. It was determined that the subject should be recommended to the immediate consideration of the council.

"MR. WIGSBY produced a cauliflower somewhat larger than a chaise-umbrella, which had been raised by no other artificial means than the simple application of highly carbonated soda-water as manure. He explained that by scooping out the head, which would afford a new and delicious species of nourishment for the poor, a parachute, in principle something similar to that constructed by M. Garnerin, was at once obtained; the stalk, of course, being kept downwards. He added that he was perfectly willing to make a descent from a height of not less than three miles and a quarter; and had in fact already proposed the same to the proprietors of Vauxhall Gardens, who in the handsomest manner at once consented to his wishes, and appointed an early day next summer for the undertaking; merely stipulating that the rim of the cauliflower should be previously broken in three or four places to ensure the safety of the descent.

"THE PRESIDENT congratulated the public on the *grand gala* in store for them, and warmly eulogized the proprietors of the establishment alluded to, for their love of science, and regard for the safety of human life, both of which did them the highest honour.

"A Member wished to know how many thousand additional lamps the royal property would be illuminated with on the night after the descent.

"MR. WIGSBY replied that the point was not yet finally decided; but he believed it was proposed, over and above the ordinary illuminations, to exhibit in various devices eight millions and a half of additional lamps.

"The Member expressed himself much gratified with this announcement.

"MR. BLUNDERUM delighted the section with a most interesting and valuable paper 'On the Last Moments of the Learned Pig,' which produced a very strong impression on the assembly, the account being compiled from the personal recollections of his favourite attendant. The account stated in the most emphatic terms that the animal's name was not Toby,

but Solomon; and distinctly proved that he could have no near relatives in the profession, as many designing persons had falsely stated, inasmuch as his father, mother, brothers, and sisters had all fallen victims to the butcher at different times. An uncle of his, indeed, had with very great labour been traced to a stye in Somers Town; but as he was in a very infirm state at the time, being afflicted with measles, and shortly afterwards disappeared, there appeared too much reason to conjecture that he had been converted into sausages. The disorder of the Learned Pig was originally a severe cold, which, being aggravated by excessive trough indulgence, finally settled upon the lungs, and terminated in a general decay of the constitution. A melancholy instance of a presentiment entertained by the animal of his approaching dissolution was recorded. After gratifying a numerous and fashionable company with his performances, in which no falling off whatever was visible, he fixed his eyes on the biographer, and, turning to the watch which lay on the floor, and on which he was accustomed to point out the hour, deliberately passed his snout twice round the dial. In precisely four-and-twenty hours from that time he had ceased to exist!

"PROFESSOR WHEEZY inquired whether, previous to his demise, the animal had expressed, by signs or otherwise, any wishes regarding the disposal of his little property.

"MR. BLUNDERUM replied, that, when the biographer took up the pack of cards at the conclusion of the performance, the animal grunted several times in a significant manner, and nodding his head as he was accustomed to do when gratified. From these gestures it was understood that he wished the attendant to keep the cards, which he had ever since done. He had not expressed any wish relative to his watch, which had accordingly been pawned by the same individual.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know whether any member of the section had ever seen or conversed with the Pig-faced Lady, who was reported to have worn a black velvet mask, and to have taken her meals from a golden trough.

"After some hesitation a member replied that the Pig-faced Lady was his mother-in-law, and that he trusted the President would not violate the sanctity of private life.

"THE PRESIDENT begged pardon. He had considered the Pig-faced Lady a public character. Would the honourable member object to state, with a view to the advancement of science, whether she was in any way connected with the Learned Pig?

"The member replied in the same low tone, that, as the question appeared to involve a suspicion that the Learned Pig might be his half-brother, he must decline answering it."

SECTION B.—ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.
COACH-HOUSE, PIG AND TINDER-BOX.

President—Dr. Toorell. *Vice-Presidents*—Professors Muff and Nogo.

"DR. KUTANKUMAGEN (of Moscow) read to the section a report of a case which had occurred within his own practice, strikingly illustrative of the power of medicine as exemplified in his successful treatment of a virulent disorder. He had been called in to visit the patient on the 1st of April, 1837. He was then labouring under symptoms peculiarly alarming to any medical man. His frame was stout and muscular, his step firm and elastic, his cheeks plump and red, his voice loud, his appetite good, his pulse full and round. He was in the constant habit of eating three meals *per diem*, and of drinking at least one bottle of wine, and one glass of spirituous liquors diluted with water, in the course of the four and twenty hours. He laughed constantly, and in so hearty a manner that it was terrible to hear him. By dint of powerful medicine, low diet, and bleeding, the symptoms in the course of three days perceptibly decreased. A rigid perseverance in the same course of treatment for only one week, accompanied with small doses of water-gruel, weak broth, and barley-water, led to their entire disappearance. In the course of a month he was sufficiently recovered to be carried downstairs by two nurses, and to enjoy an airing in a close carriage, supported by soft pillows. At the present moment he was restored so far as to walk about, with the slight assistance of a crutch and a boy. It would perhaps be gratifying to the section to learn that he ate little, drank little, slept little, and was never heard to laugh by any accident whatever.

"DR. W. R. FEE, in complimenting the honourable member upon the triumphant cure he had effected, begged to ask whether the patient still bled freely?

"DR. KUTANKUMAGEN replied in the affirmative.

"DR. W. R. FEE.—And you found that he bled freely during the whole course of the disorder?

"DR. KUTANKUMAGEN.—Oh dear, yes; most freely.

"DR. NEESHAWTS supposed, that if the patient had not submitted to be bled with great readiness and perseverance, so extraordinary a cure could never, in fact, have been accomplished. Dr. Kutankumagen rejoined, certainly not.

"MR. KNIGHT BELL (M.R.C.S.) exhibited a wax preparation of the interior of a gentleman who in early life had inadvertently swallowed a door-key. It was a curious fact that a medical student of dissipated habits, being present at the *post mortem* examination, found means to escape unobserved from the room, with that portion of the coats of the

stomach upon which an exact model of the instrument was distinctly impressed, with which he hastened to a locksmith of doubtful character, who made a new key from the pattern so shown to him. With this key the medical student entered the house of the deceased gentleman, and committed a burglary to a large amount, for which he was subsequently tried and executed.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know what became of the original key after the lapse of years. Mr. Knight Bell replied that the gentleman was always much accustomed to punch, and it was supposed the acid had gradually devoured it.

"DR. NEESHAWTS and several of the members were of opinion that the key must have lain very cold and heavy upon the gentleman's stomach.

"MR. KNIGHT BELL believed it did at first. It was worthy of remark, perhaps, that for some years the gentleman was troubled with a nightmare, under the influence of which he always imagined himself a wine-cellar door.

"PROFESSOR MUFF related a very extraordinary and convincing proof of the wonderful efficacy of the system of infinitesimal doses, which the section were doubtless aware was based upon the theory that the very minutest amount of any given drug, properly dispersed through the human frame, would be productive of precisely the same result as a very large dose administered in the usual manner. Thus, the fortieth part of a grain of calomel was supposed to be equal to a five-grain calomel pill, and so on in proportion throughout the whole range of medicine. He had tried the experiment in a curious manner upon a publican who had been brought into the hospital with a broken head, and was cured upon the infinitesimal system in the incredibly short space of three months. This man was a hard drinker. He (Professor Muff) had dispersed three drops of rum through a bucket of water, and requested the man to drink the whole. What was the result? Before he had drunk a quart, he was in a state of beastly intoxication; and five other men were made dead drunk with the remainder.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know whether an infinitesimal dose of soda-water would have recovered them? Professor Muff replied that the twenty-fifth part of a teaspoonful, properly administered to each patient, would have sobered him immediately. The president remarked that this was a most important discovery, and he hoped the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen would patronize it immediately.

"A member begged to be informed whether it would be possible to administer—say, the twentieth part of a grain of bread and cheese to all grown-up paupers, and the fortieth part to children, with the same satisfying effect as their present allowance.

"PROFESSOR MUFF was willing to stake his professional reputation on the perfect adequacy of such a quantity of food to the support of human life—in workhouses; the addition of the fifteenth part of a grain of pudding twice a week would render it a high diet.

"PROFESSOR NOGO called the attention of the section to a very extraordinary case of animal magnetism. A private watchman being merely looked at by the operator from the opposite side of a wide street, was at once observed to be in a very drowsy and languid state. He was followed to his box, and being once slightly rubbed on the palms of the hands, fell into a sound sleep, in which he continued without intermission for ten hours."

SECTION C.—STATISTICS.
HAY-LOFT, ORIGINAL PIG.

President—Mr. Woodensconce.
Vice-Presidents—
Mr. Ledbrain and Mr. Timbered.

"MR. SLUG stated to the section the result of some calculations he had made with great difficulty and labour, regarding the state of infant education among the middle classes of London. He found that, within a circle of three miles from the Elephant and Castle, the following were the names and numbers of children's books principally in circulation:—

"Jack the Giant-Killer	7,943
Ditto and Beanstalk	8,621
Ditto and Eleven Brothers . .	2,845
Ditto and Gill	1,998
Total	21,407

"He found that the proportion of 'Robinson Crusoes' to 'Philp Quarlls' was as four and a half to one; and that the preponderance of 'Valentine and Orsons' over 'Goody Two Shoeses' was as three and an eighth of the former to half a one of the latter; a comparison of 'Seven Champions' with 'Simple Simons' gave the same result. The ignorance that prevailed was lamentable. One child, on being asked whether he would rather be Saint George of England or a respectable tallow-chandler, instantly replied, 'Taint George of Ingling.' Another, a little boy of eight years old, was found to be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons, and openly stated that it was his intention, when he grew up, to rush forth sword in hand for the deliverance of captive princesses and the promiscuous slaughter of giants. Not one child among the number interrogated had ever heard of Mungo Park,—some inquiring whether he was at all connected with the black man that swept the crossing, and others whether he was in any way related to the Regent's Park. They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of

mathematics, and considered 'Sinbad the Sailor' the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.

"A Member strongly deprecating the use of all the other books mentioned, suggested that 'Jack and Jill' might perhaps be exempted from the general censure, inasmuch as the hero and heroine, in the very outset of the tale, were depicted as going *up* a hill to fetch a pail of water, which was a laborious and useful occupation,—supposing the family linen was being washed, for instance.

"MR. SLUG feared that the moral effect of this passage was more than counterbalanced by another in a subsequent part of the poem, in which very gross allusion was made to the mode in which the heroine was personally chastised by her mother

"'For laughing at Jack's disaster;'

besides, the whole work had this one great fault, *it was not true*.

"THE PRESIDENT complimented the honourable member on the excellent distinction he had drawn. Several other members, too, dwelt upon the immense and urgent necessity of storing the minds of children with nothing but facts and figures; which process, the President very forcibly remarked, had made them (the section) the men they were.

"MR. SLUG then stated some curious calculations respecting the dogs'-meat barrows of London. He found that the total number of small carts and barrows engaged in dispensing provision to the cats and dogs of the metropolis was one thousand seven hundred and forty-three. The average number of skewers delivered daily with the provender, by each dogs'-meat cart or barrow, was thirty-six. Now, multiplying the number of skewers so delivered by the number of barrows, a total of sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers daily would be obtained. Allowing that, of these sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers, the odd two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight were accidently devoured with the meat, by the most voracious of the animals supplied, it followed that sixty thousand skewers per day, or the enormous number of twenty-one millions nine hundred thousand skewers annually, were wasted in the kennels and dust-holes of London; which, if collected and warehoused, would in ten years' time afford a mass of timber more than sufficient for the construction of a first-rate vessel of war for the use of Her Majesty's navy, to be called 'The Royal Skewer,' and to become under that name the terror of all the enemies of this island.

"MR. X. LEDERAIN read a very ingenious communication, from which it appeared that the total number of legs belonging to the manufacturing population of one great town in Yorkshire was, in round numbers, forty thousand, while the total number of chair and stool legs in their houses was only thirty thousand, which, upon the very favourable average of three legs to a seat, yielded only ten thousand seats in all. From this calculation it would appear,—not taking wooden or cork legs into the account, but allowing two legs to every person, — that ten thousand individuals (one-half of the whole population) were either destitute of any rest for their legs at all, or passed the whole of their leisure time in sitting upon boxes.

"SECTION D.—MECHANICAL SCIENCE.
COACH-HOUSE, ORIGINAL PIG.

President—Mr. Carter. *Vice-Presidents*—Mr. Truck and Mr. Waghorn.

"PROFESSOR QUEERSPECK exhibited an elegant model of a portable railway, neatly mounted in a green case, for the waistcoat-pocket. By attaching this beautiful instrument to his boots, any bank or public office clerk could transport himself from his place of residence to his place of business, at the easy rate of sixty-five miles an hour, which, to gentlemen of sedentary pursuits, would be an incalculable advantage.

"THE PRESIDENT was desirous of knowing whether it was necessary to have a level surface on which the gentleman was to run.

"PROFESSOR QUEERSPECK explained that city gentlemen would run in trains, being handcuffed together to prevent confusion or unpleasantness. For instance, trains would start every morning at eight, nine, and ten o'clock, from Camden Town, Islington, Camberwell, Hackney, and various other places in which city gentlemen are accustomed to reside. It would be necessary to have a level, but he had provided for this difficulty by proposing that the best line that the circumstances would admit of should be taken through the sewers which undermine the streets of the metropolis, and which, well lighted by jets from the gas-pipes which run immediately above them, would form a pleasant and commodious arcade, especially in winter-time, when the inconvenient custom of carrying umbrellas, now so general, could be wholly dispensed with. In reply to another question, Professor Queerspeck stated that no substitute for the purposes to which these arcades were at present devoted had yet occurred to him, but that he hoped no fanciful objection on this head would be allowed to interfere with so great an undertaking.

"MR. JOBBA produced a forcing-machine on a novel plan, for bringing joint-stock railway shares prematurely to a premium. The instrument was in the form of an elegant gilt weather-glass, of most dazzling appearance, and was worked behind, by strings, after the manner of a pantomime trick, the strings being always pulled by the directors of the company to which the machine belonged. The

quicksilver was so ingeniously placed, that when the acting directors held shares in their pockets, figures denoting very small expenses and very large returns appeared upon the glass; but the moment the directors parted with these pieces of paper, the estimate of needful expenditure suddenly increased itself to an immense extent, while the statements of certain profits became reduced in the same proportion. Mr. Jobba stated that the machine had been in constant requisition for some months past, and he had never once known it to fail.

"A Member expressed his opinion that it was extremely neat and pretty. He wished to know whether it was not liable to accidental derangement? Mr. Jobba said that the whole machine was undoubedtly liable to be blown up, but that was the only objection to it.

"PROFESSOR NOGO arrived from the anatomical section to exhibit a model of a safety fire-escape, which could be fixed at any time, in less than half an hour, and by means of which the youngest or most infirm persons (successfully resisting the progress of the flames until it was quite ready) could be preserved if they merely balanced themselves for a few minutes on the sill of their bed-room window, and got into the escape without falling into the street. The Professor stated that the number of boys who had been rescued in the daytime by this machine from houses which were not on fire, was almost incredible. Not a conflagration had occurred in the whole of London for many months past to which the escape had not been carried on the very next day, and put in action before a concourse of persons.

"THE PRESIDENT inquired whether there was not some difficulty in ascertaining which was the top of the machine, and which the bottom, in cases of pressing emergency.

"PROFESSOR NOGO explained that of course it could not be expected to act quite as well when there was a fire as when there was not a fire; but in the former case he thought it would be of equal service whether the top were up or down."

With the last section our correspondent concludes his most able and faithful Report, which will never cease to reflect credit upon him for his scientific attainments, and upon us for our enterprising spirit. It is needless to take a review of the subjects which have been discussed; of the mode in which they have been examined; of the great truths which they have elicited. They are now before the world, and we leave them to read, to consider, and to profit.

The place of meeting for next year has undergone discussion, and has at length been decided, regard being had to, and evidence being taken upon, the goodness of its wines, the supply of its markets, the hospitality of its inhabitants, and the quality of its hotels. We hope at this next meeting our correspondent may again be present, and that we may be once more the means of placing his communications before the world. Until that period we have been prevailed upon to allow this number of our Miscellany to be retailed to the public, or wholesaled to the trade, without any advance upon our usual price.

We have only to add, that the committees are now broken up, and that Mudfog is once again restored to its accustomed tranquillity, —that professors and members have had balls, and *soirées*, and suppers, and great mutual complimentations, and have at length dispersed to their several homes, whither all good wishes and joys attend them, until next year! (Signed) BOZ.

FULL REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE MUDFOG ASSOCIATION

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EVERYTHING.

In October last, we did ourselves the immortal credit of recording, at an enormous expense, and by dint of exertions unparalleled in the history of periodical publication, the proceedings of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything, which in that month held its first great half-yearly meeting, to the wonder and delight of the whole empire. We announced at the conclusion of that extraordinary and most remarkable Report, that when the Second Meeting of the Society should take place, we should be found again at our post, renewing our gigantic and spirited endeavours, and once more making the world ring with the accuracy, authenticity, immeasurable superiority, and intense remarkability of our account of its proceedings. In redemption of this pledge, we caused to be dispatched per steam to Oldcastle (at which place this second meeting of the society was held on the 20th instant), the same superhumanly-endowed gentleman who furnished the former report, and who,—gifted by nature with transcendent abilities, and furnished by us with a body of assistants scarcely inferior to himself,—has forwarded a series of letters, which, for faithfulness of description, power of language, fervour of thought, happiness of expression, and importance of subject-matter, have no equal in the epistolary literature of any age or country. We give this gentleman's correspondence entire, and in the order in which it reached our office.

"*Saloon of Steamer,*
Thursday night, half-past eight.

"When I left New Burlington Street this evening in the hackney cabriolet, number four thousand two hundred and eighty-five, I experienced sensations as novel as they were oppressive. A sense of the importance of the task I had undertaken, a consciousness that I was leaving London, and, stranger still, going somewhere else, a feeling of loneliness and a sensation of jolting, quite bewildered my thoughts, and for a time rendered me even insensible to the presence of my carpet-bag and hat-box. I shall ever feel grateful to the driver of a Blackwall omnibus who, by thrusting the pole of his vehicle through the small door of the cabriolet, awakened me from a tumult of imaginings that are wholly indescribable. But of such materials is our imperfect nature composed!

"I am happy to say that I am the first passenger on board, and shall thus be enabled to give you an account of all that happens in the order of its occurrence. The chimney is smoking a good deal, and so are the crew; and the captain, I am informed, is very drunk in a little house upon deck, something like a black turnpike. I should infer from all I hear that he has got the steam up.

"You will readily guess with what feelings I have just made the discovery that my berth is in the same closet with those engaged by Professor Woodensconce, Mr. Slug, and Professor Grime. Professor Woodensconce has taken the shelf above me, and Mr. Slug and Professor Grime the two shelves opposite. Their luggage has already arrived. On Mr. Slug's bed is a long tin tube of about three inches in diameter, carefully closed at both ends. What can this contain? Some powerful instrument of a new construction, doubtless.

"*Ten minutes past nine.*

"Nobody has yet arrived, nor has anything fresh come in my way except several joints of beef and mutton, from which I conclude that a good plain dinner has been provided for to-morrow. There is a singular smell below, which gave me some uneasiness at first; but as the steward says it is always there, and never goes away, I am quite comfortable again. I learn from this man that the different sections will be distributed at the Black Boy and Stomachache, and the Bootjack and Countenance. If this intelligence be true (and I have no reason to doubt it), your readers will draw such conclusions as their different opinions may suggest.

"I write down these remarks as they occur to me, or as the facts come to my knowledge, in order that my first impressions may lose nothing of their original vividness. I shall dispatch them in small packets as opportunities arise."

"*Half-past nine.*

"SOME dark object has just appeared upon the wharf. I think it is a travelling carriage."

"*A quarter to ten.*

"NO, it isn't."

"*Half-past ten.*

"THE passengers are pouring in every instant. Four omnibuses full have just arrived upon the wharf, and all is bustle and activity. The noise and confusion are very great. Cloths are laid in the cabins, and the steward is placing blue platesful of knobs of cheese at equal distances down the centre of the tables. He drops a great many knobs; but, being used to it, picks them up again with great dexterity, and, after wiping them on his sleeve, throws them back into the plates. He is a young man of exceedingly prepossessing appearance —either dirty or a mulatto, but I think the former.

"An interesting old gentleman, who came to the wharf in an omnibus, has just quarrelled violently with the porters, and is staggering towards the vessel with a large trunk in his arms. I trust and hope that he may reach it in safety; but the board he has to cross is narrrow and slippery. Was that a splash? Gracious Powers!

"I have just returned from the deck. The trunk is standing upon the extreme brink of the wharf, but the old gentleman is nowhere to be seen. The watchman is not sure whether he went down or not, but promises to drag for him the first thing to-morrow morning. May his humane efforts prove successful!

"Professor Nogo has this moment arrived with his nightcap on under his hat. He has ordered a glass of cold brandy and water with a hard biscuit and a basin, and has gone straight to bed. What can this mean?

"The three other scientific gentlemen to whom I have already alluded have come on board, and have all tried their beds, with the exception of Professor Woodensconce, who sleeps in one of the top ones, and can't get into it. Mr. Slug, who sleeps in the other top one, is unable to get out of his, and is to have his supper handed up by a boy. I have had the honour to introduce myself to these gentlemen, and we have amicably arranged the order in which we shall retire to rest; which it is necessary to agree upon, because, although the cabin is very comfortable, there is not room for more than one gentleman to be out of bed at a time, and even he must take his boots off in the passage.

"As I anticipated, the knobs of cheese were provided for the passengers' supper, and are now in course of consumption. Your readers will be surprised to hear that Professor Woodensconce has abstained from cheese for eight years, although he takes butter in considerable quantities. Professor Grime having lost several teeth, is unable, I observe, to eat his crusts without previously soaking them in his bottled porter. How interesting are these peculiarities!"

"*Half-past eleven.*

"PROFESSORS WOODENSCONCE and Grime, with a degree of good humour that delights us all, have just arranged to toss for a bottle of mulled port. There has been some discussion whether the payment should be decided by the first toss or the best out of three. Eventually the latter course has been determined on. Deeply do I wish that both gentlemen could win; but that being impossible, I own that my personal aspirations (I speak as an individual, and do not compromise either you or your readers by this expression of feeling) are with Professor Woodensconce. I have backed that gentleman to the amount of eighteenpence."

"*Twenty minutes to twelve.*

"PROFESSOR GRIME has inadvertently tossed his half-crown out of one of the cabin windows, and it has been arranged that the steward shall toss for him. Bets are offered on any side to any amount, but there are no takers.

"Professor Woodensconce has just called 'woman;' but the coin having lodged in a beam, is a long time coming down again. The interest and suspense of this one moment are beyond anything that can be imagined."

"*Twelve o'clock.*

"THE mulled port is smoking on the table before me, and Professor Grime has won. Tossing is a game of chance; but on every ground, whether of public or private character, intellectual endowments or scientific attainments, I cannot help expressing my opinion that Professor Woodensconce *ought* to have come off victorious. There is an exultation about Professor Grime incompatible, I fear, with true greatness."

"*A quarter-past twelve.*

"PROFESSOR GRIME continues to exult, and to boast of his victory in no very measured terms, observing that he always does win, and that he knew it would be a 'head' beforehand, with many other remarks of a similar nature. Surely this gentleman is not so lost to every feeling of decency and propriety as not to feel and know the superiority of Professor Woodensconce! Is Professor Grime insane? or does he wish to be reminded in plain language of his true position in society, and the precise level of his acquirements and abilities? Professor Grime will do well to look to this."

"*One o'clock.*

"I AM writing in bed. The small cabin is illuminated by the feeble light of a flickering lamp suspended from the ceiling; Professor

Grime is lying on the opposite shelf on the broad of his back, with his mouth wide open. The scene is indescribably solemn. The rippling of the the tide, the noise of the sailors' feet overhead, the gruff voices on the river, the dogs on the shore, the snoring of the passengers, and a constant creaking of every plank in the vessel, are the only sounds that meet the ear. With these exceptions, all is profound silence.

"My curiosity has been within the last moment very much excited. Mr. Slug, who lies above Professor Grime, has cautiously withdrawn the curtains of his berth, and, after looking anxiously out, as if to satisfy himself that his companions are asleep, has taken up the tin tube of which I have before spoken, and is regarding it with great interest. What rare mechanical combination can be contained in that mysterious case? It is evidently a profound secret to all."

"*A quarter-past one.*

"THE behaviour of Mr. Slug grows more and more mysterious. He has unscrewed the top of the tube, and now renews his observations upon his companions, evidently to make sure that he is wholly unobserved. He is clearly on the eve of some great experiment. Pray Heaven that it be not a dangerous one; but the interests of science must be promoted, and I am prepared for the worst."

"*Five minutes later.*

"HE has produced a large pair of scissors, and drawn a roll of some substance, not unlike parchment in appearance, from the tin case. The experiment is about to begin. I must strain my eyes to the utmost, in the attempt to follow its minutest operation."

"*Twenty minutes before two.*

"I HAVE at length been enabled to ascertain that the tin tube contains a few yards of some celebrated plaster, recommended—as I discover on regarding the label attentively through my eyeglass—as a preservative against sea-sickness. Mr. Slug has cut it up into small portions, and is now sticking it over himself in every direction."

"*Three o'clock.*

"PRECISELY a quarter of an hour ago we weighed anchor, and the machinery was suddenly put in motion with a noise so appalling, that Professor Woodensconce (who had ascended to his berth by means of a platform of carpet bags arranged by himself on geometrical principles) darted from his shelf head foremost, and, gaining his feet with all the rapidity of extreme terror, ran wildly into the ladies' cabin, under the impression that we were sinking, and uttering loud cries for aid. I am assured that the scene which ensued baffles all description. There were one hundred and forty-seven ladies in their respective berths at the time.

"Mr. Slug has remarked, as an additional instance of the extreme ingenuity of the steam-engine as applied to purposes of navigation, that in whatever part of the vessel a passenger's berth may be situated, the machinery always appears to be exactly under his pillow. He intends stating this very beautiful though simple discovery to the association."

"*Half-past three.*

"WE are still in smooth water; that is to say, in as smooth water as a steam-vessel ever can be, for, as Professor Woodensconce (who has just woke up) learnedly remarks, another great point of ingenuity about a steamer is, that it always carries a little storm with it. You can scarcely conceive how exciting the jerking pulsation of the ship becomes. It is a matter of positive difficulty to get to sleep."

"*Friday afternoon, six o'clock.*

"I REGRET to inform you that Mr. Slug's plaster has proved of no avail. He is in great agony, but has applied several large additional pieces notwithstanding. How affecting is this extreme devotion to science and pursuit of knowledge under the most trying circumstances!

"We were extremely happy this morning, and the breakfast was one of the most animated description. Nothing unpleasant occurred until noon, with the exception of Doctor Foxey's brown silk umbrella and white hat becoming entangled in the machinery while he was explaining to a knot of ladies the construction of the steam-engine. I fear the gravy soup for lunch was injudicious. We lost a great many passengers almost immediately afterwards."

"*Half-past six.*

"I AM again in bed. Anything so heart-rending as Mr. Slug's sufferings it has never yet been my lot to witness."

"*Seven o'clock.*

"A MESSENGER has just come down for a clean pocket-handkerchief from Professor Woodensconce's bag, that unfortunate gentleman being quite unable to leave the deck, and imploring constantly to be thrown overboard. From this man I understand that Professor Nogo, though in a state of utter exhaustion, clings feebly to the hard biscuit and cold brandy and water, under the impression that they will yet restore him. Such is the triumph of mind over matter.

"Professor Grime is in bed, to all appearance quite well; but he *will* eat, and it is disagreeable to see him. Has this gentleman no sympathy with the sufferings of his fellow-creatures? If he has, on what principle can he call for mutton chops—and smile?"

"*Black Boy and Stomachache,*
Oldcastle, Saturday noon.

"YOU will be happy to learn that I have at length arrived here in safety. The town is excessively crowded, and all the private lodgings and hotels are filled with *savans* of both sexes. The tremendous assemblage of intellect that one encounters in every street is in the last degree overwhelming.

"Notwithstanding the throng of people here, I have been fortunate enough to meet with very comfortable accommodation on very reasonable terms, having secured a sofa in the first-floor passage at one guinea per night, which includes permission to take my meals in the bar, on condition that I walk about the streets at all other times, to make room for other gentlemen similarly situated. I have been over the outhouses intended to be devoted to the reception of the various sections, both here and at the Bootjack and Countenance, and am much delighted with the arrangements. Nothing can exceed the fresh appearance of the sawdust with which the floors are sprinkled. The forms are of unplaned deal, and the general effect, as you can well imagine, is extremely beautiful."

"*Half-past nine.*

"THE number and rapidity of the arrivals are quite bewildering. Within the last ten minutes a stage-coach has driven up to the door, filled inside and out with distinguished characters, comprising Mr. Muddlebranes, Mr. Drawley, Professor Muff, Mr. X. Misty, Mr. X. X. Misty, Mr. Purblind, Professor Rummun, The Honourable and Reverend Mr. Long Eers, Professor John Ketch, Sir William Jolterhed, Doctor Buffer, Mr. Smith (of London), Mr. Brown (of Edinburgh), Sir Hookham Snivey, and Professor Pumpkinskull. The ten last-named gentlemen were wet through, and looked extremely intelligent."

"*Sunday, two o'clock, p.m.*

THE Honourable and Reverend Mr. Long Eers, accompanied by Sir William Jolterhed, walked and drove this morning. They accomplished the former feat in boots, and the latter in a hired fly. This has naturally given rise to much discussion.

"I have just learnt that an interview has taken place at the Bootjack and Countenance between Sowster, the active and intelligent beadle of this place, and Professor Pumpkinskull, who, as your readers are doubtless aware, is an influential member of the council. I forbear to communicate any of the rumours to which this very extraordinary proceeding has given rise until I have seen Sowster, and endeavoured to ascertain the truth from him."

"*Half-past six.*

"I ENGAGED a donkey-chaise shortly after writing the above, and proceeded at a brisk trot in the direction of Sowster's residence, passing through a beautiful expanse of country, with red brick buildings on either side, and stopping in the market-place to observe the spot where Mr. Kwakley's hat was blown off yesterday. It is an uneven piece of paving, but has certainly no appearance which would lead one to suppose that any such event had recently occurred there. From this point I proceeded, passing the gasworks and tallow-melter's, to a lane which had been pointed out to me as the beadle's place of residence; and before I had driven a dozen yards farther, I had the good fortune to meet Sowster himself advancing towards me.

"Sowster is a fat man, with a more enlarged development of that peculiar conformation of countenance which is vulgarly termed a double chin, than I remember to have ever seen before. He has also a very red nose, which he attributes to a habit of early rising—so red, indeed, that but for this explanation I should have supposed it to proceed from occasional inebriety. He informed me that he did not feel himself at liberty to relate what had passed between himself and Professor Pumpkinskull, but had no objection to state that it was connected with a matter of police regulation, and added with peculiar significance, 'Never wos sitch times.'

"You will easily believe that this intelligence gave me considerable surprise, not wholly unmixed with anxiety, and that I lost no time in waiting on Professor Pumpkinskull, and stating the object of my visit. After a few moments' reflection, the Professor, who, I am bound to say, behaved with the utmost politeness, openly avowed (I mark the passage in italics) *that he had requested Sowster to attend on the Monday morning at the Bootjack and Countenance to keep off the boys; and that he had further desired that the under-beadle might be stationed, with the same object, at the Black Boy and Stomachache!*

"Now, I leave this unconstitutional proceeding to your comments, and the consideration of your readers. I have yet to learn that a beadle, without the precincts of a church, churchyard, or workhouse, and acting otherwise than under the express orders of churchwardens and overseers in council assembled, to enforce the law against people who come upon the parish and other offenders, has any lawful authority whatever over the rising youth of this country. I have yet to learn that a beadle can be called out by any civilian to exercise a domination and despotism over the boys of Britain. I have yet to learn that a beadle will be permitted by the commissioners of poor law regulation to wear out the soles and heels of his boots in illegal interference with the liberties of people not proved poor or otherwise criminal. I have yet to learn that a beadle has power to stop up the Queen's highway at his will and pleasure, or that the

whole width of the street is not free and open to any man, boy, or woman in existence, up to the very walls of the houses—ay, be they Black Boys and Stomachaches, or Bootjacks and Countenances, I care not."

"*Nine o'clock.*

"I HAVE procured a local artist to make a faithful sketch of the tyrant Sowster, which, as he has acquired this infamous celebrity, you will no doubt wish to have engraved for the purpose of presenting a copy with every copy of your next number. I enclose it. The underbeadle has consented to write his life, but it is to be strictly anonymous.

"The accompanying likeness is of course from the life, and complete in every respect. Even if I had been totally ignorant of the man's real character, and it had been placed before me without remark, I should have shuddered involuntarily. There is an intense malignity of expression in the features, and a baleful ferocity of purpose in the ruffian's eye, which appals and sickens. His whole air is rampant with cruelty, nor is the stomach less characteristic of his demoniac propensities."

"*Monday.*

"THE great day has at length arrived. I have neither eyes, nor ears, nor pens, nor ink, nor paper, for anything but the wonderful proceedings that have astounded my senses. Let me collect my energies and proceed to the account.

SECTION A.—ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY.
FRONT PARLOUR, BLACK BOY AND STOMACHACHE.

President—Sir William Jolterhed.
Vice-Presidents—
Mr. Muddlebranes and Mr. Drawley.

"MR. X. X. MISTY communicated some remarks on the disappearance of dancing bears from the streets of London, with observations on the exhibition of monkeys as connected with barrel-organs. The writer had observed, with feelings of the utmost pain and regret, that some years ago a sudden and unaccountable change in the public taste took place with reference to itinerant bears, who, being discountenanced by the populace, gradually fell off one by one from the streets of the metropolis, until not one remained to create a taste for natural history in the breasts of the poor and uninstructed. One bear, indeed, a brown and ragged animal, had lingered about the haunts of his former triumphs, with a worn and dejected visage and feeble limbs, and had essayed to wield his quarter-staff for the amusement of the multitude; but hunger, and an utter want of any due recompense for his abilities, had at length driven him from the field, and it was only too probable that he had fallen a sacrifice to the rising taste for grease. He regretted to add that a similar, and no less lamentable, change had taken place with reference to monkeys. These delightful animals had formerly been almost as plentiful as the organs on the tops of which they were accustomed to sit; the proportion in the year 1829 (it appeared by the Parliamentary return) being as one monkey to three organs. Owing, however, to an altered taste in musical instruments, and the substitution, in a great measure, of narrow boxes of music for organs, which left the monkeys nothing to sit upon, this source of public amusement was wholly dried up. Considering it a matter of the deepest importance, in connection with national education, that the people should not lose such opportunities of making themselves acquainted with the manners and customs of two most interesting species of animals, the author submitted that some measures should be immediately taken for the restoration of these pleasing and truly intellectual amusements.

"THE PRESIDENT inquired by what means the honourable member proposed to attain this most desirable end?

"THE AUTHOR submitted that it could be most fully and satisfactorily accomplished, if Her Majesty's Government would cause to be brought over to England, and maintained at the public expense and for the public amusement, such a number of bears as would enable every quarter of the town to be visited—say at least by three bears a week. No difficulty whatever need be experienced in providing a fitting place for the reception of these animals, as a commodious bear-garden could be erected in the immediate neighbourhood of both Houses of Parliament; obviously the most proper and eligible spot for such an establishment.

"PROFFSSOR MULL doubted very much whether any correct ideas of natural history were propagated by the means to which the honourable member had so ably adverted. On the contrary, he believed that they had been the means of diffusing very incorrect and imperfect notions on the subject. He spoke from personal observation and personal experience, when he said that many children of great abilities had been induced to believe, from what they had observed in the streets, at and before the period to which the honourable gentleman had referred, that all monkeys were born in red coats and spangles, and that their hats and feathers also came by nature. He wished to know distinctly whether the honourable gentleman attributed the want of encouragement the bears had met with to the decline of public taste in that respect, or to a want of ability on the part of the bears themselves?

"Mr. X. X. MISTY replied, that he could not bring himself to believe but that there

must be a great deal of floating talent among the bears and monkeys generally; which, in the absence of any proper encouragement, was dispersed in other directions.

"PROFESSOR PUMPKINSKULL wished to take that opportunity of calling the attention of the section to a most important and serious point. The author of the treatise just read had alluded to the prevalent taste for bears'-grease as a means of promoting the growth of hair, which undoubtedly was diffused to a very great and (as it appeared to him) very alarming extent. No gentleman attending that section could fail to be aware of the fact that the youth of the present age evinced, by their behaviour in the streets, and at all places of public resort, a considerable lack of that gallantry and gentlemanly feeling which, in more ignorant times, had been thought becoming. He wished to know whether it were possible that a constant outward application of bears'-grease by the young gentlemen about town had imperceptibly infused into those unhappy persons something of the nature and quality of the bear. He shuddered as he threw out the remark; but if this theory, on inquiry, should prove to be well founded, it would at once explain a great deal of unpleasant eccentricity of behaviour, which, without some such discovery, was wholly unaccountable.

"THE PRESIDENT highly complimented the learned gentleman on his most valuable suggestion, which produced the greatest effect upon the assembly; and remarked that only a week previous he had seen some young gentlemen at a theatre eyeing a box of ladies with a fierce intensity, which nothing but the influence of some brutish appetite could possibly explain. It was dreadful to reflect that our youth were so rapidly verging into a generation of bears.

"After a scene of scientific enthusiasm it was resolved that this important question should be immediately submitted to the consideration of the council.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know whether any gentleman could inform the section what had become of the dancing dogs?

"A MEMBER replied, after some hesitation, that on the day after three glee-singers had been committed to prison as criminals by a late most zealous police magistrate of the metropolis, the dogs had abandoned their professional duties, and dispersed themselves in different quarters of the town to gain a livelihood by less dangerous means. He was given to understand that since that period they had supported themselves by lying in wait for and robbing blind men's poodles.

"MR. FLUMMERY exhibited a twig, claiming to be a veritable branch of that noble tree known to naturalists as the SHAKSPEARE, which has taken root in every land and climate, and gathered under the shade of its broad green boughs the great family of mankind. The learned gentleman remarked that the twig had been undoubtedly called by other names in its time; but that it had been pointed out to him by an old lady in Warwickshire, where the great tree had grown, as a shoot of the genuine SHAKSPEARE, by which name he begged to introduce it to his countrymen.

"THE PRESIDENT wished to know what botanical definition the honourable gentleman could afford of the curiosity.

"Mr. FLUMMERY expressed his opinion that it was A DECIDED PLANT."

SECTION B.—DISPLAY OF MODELS AND MECHANICAL SCIENCE.
LARGE ROOM, BOOTJACK AND COUNTENANCE.

President—Mr. Mallett.
Vice-Presidents—Messrs. Leaver and Scroo.

"MR. CRINKLES exhibited a most beautiful and delicate machine, of little larger size than an ordinary snuff-box, manufactured entirely by himself, and composed exclusively of steel, by the aid of which more pockets could be picked in one hour than by the present slow and tedious process in four and twenty. The inventor remarked that it had been put into active operation in Fleet Street, the Strand, and other thoroughfares, and had never been once known to fail.

"After some slight delay, occasioned by the various members of the section buttoning their pockets,

"THE PRESIDENT narrowly inspected the invention, and declared that he had never seen a machine of more beautiful or exquisite construction. Would the inventor be good enough to inform the section whether he had taken any and what means for bringing it into general operation?

"MR. CRINKLES stated that, after encountering some preliminary difficulties, he had succeeded in putting himself in communication with Mr. Fogle Hunter, and other gentlemen connected with the swell mob, who had awarded the invention the very highest and most unqualified approbation. He regretted to say, however, that these distinguished practitioners, in common with a gentleman of the name of Gimlet-eyed Tommy, and other members of a secondary grade of the profession whom he was understood to represent, entertained an insuperable objection to its being brought into general use, on the ground that it would have the inevitable effect of almost entirely superseding manual labour, and throwing a great number of highly deserving persons out of employment.

"THE PRESIDENT hoped that no such fanciful objections would be allowed to stand in the way of such a great public improvement.

"MR. CRINKLES hoped so too; but he feared that if the gentlemen of the swell mob persevered in their objection, nothing could be done.

"PROFESSOR GRIME suggested that surely, in that case, Her Majesty's Government might be prevailed upon to take it up

"MR. CRINKLES said that if the objection were found to be insuperable he should apply to Parliament, which he thought could not fail to recognize the utility of the invention.

"THE PRESIDENT observed that, up to this time, Parliament had certainly got on very well without it; but, as they did their business on a very large scale, he had no doubt they would gladly adopt the improvement. His only fear was that the machine might be worn out by constant working.

"MR. COPPERNOSE called the attention of the section to a proposition of great magnitude and interest, illustrated by a vast number of models, and stated with much clearness and perspicuity in a treatise, entitled 'Practical Suggestions on the Necessity of Providing some Harmless and Wholesome Relaxation for the Young Noblemen of England.' His proposition was, that a space of ground of not less than ten miles in length, and four in breadth, should be purchased by a new company, to be incorporated by Act of Parliament, and enclosed by a brick wall of not less than twelve feet in height. He proposed that it should be laid out with highway roads, turnpikes, bridges, miniature villages, and every object that could conduce to the comfort and glory of Four-in-hand Clubs, so that they might be fairly presumed to require no drive beyond it. This delightful retreat would be fitted up with most commodious and extensive stables, for the convenience of such of the nobility and gentry as had a taste for ostlering, and with houses of entertainment, furnished in the most expensive and handsome style. It would be further provided with whole streets of door-knockers and bell-handles of extra size, so constructed that they could be easily wrenched off at night, and regularly screwed on again, by attendants provided for the purpose, every day. There would also be gas-lamps of real glass, which could be broken at a comparatively small expense per dozen, and a broad and handsome foot pavement for gentlemen to drive their cabriolets upon when they were humorously disposed—for the full enjoyment of which feat live pedestrians would be procured from the workhouse at a very small charge per head. The place being enclosed, and carefully screened from the intrusion of the public, there would be no objection to gentlemen laying aside any article of their costume that was considered to interfere with a pleasant frolic, or, indeed, to their walking about without any costume at all, if they liked that better. In short, every facility for enjoyment would be afforded that the most gentlemanly person could possibly desire. But as even these advantages would be incomplete unless there were some means provided of enabling the nobility and gentry to display their prowess when they sallied forth after dinner, and as some inconvenience might be experienced in the event of their being reduced to the necessity of pummelling each other, the inventor had turned his attention to the construction of an entirely new police force, composed exclusively of automaton figures, which, with the assistance of the ingenious Signor Gagliardi, of Windmill Street in the Haymarket, he had succeeded in making with such nicety, that a policeman, cab-driver, or old woman, made upon the principle of the models exhibited, would walk about until knocked down like any real man—nay, more, if set upon and beaten by six or eight noblemen or gentlemen after it was down, the figure would utter divers groans, mingled with entreaties for mercy, thus rendering the illusion complete, and the enjoyment perfect. But the invention did not stop even here; for station-houses would be built, containing good beds for noblemen and gentlemen during the night, and in the morning they would repair to a commodious police office, where a pantomimic investigation would take place before the automaton magistrates—quite equal to life—who would fine them in so many counters, with which they would be previously provided for the purpose. This office would be furnished with an inclined plane, for the convenience of any nobleman or gentleman who might wish to bring in his horse as a witness; and the prisoners would be at perfect liberty, as they were now, to interrupt the complainants as much as they pleased, and to make any remarks that they thought proper. The charge for these amusements would amount to very little more than they already cost, and the inventor submitted that the public would be much benefited and comforted by the proposed arrangement.

"PROFESSOR NOGO wished to be informed what amount of automaton police force it was proposed to raise in the first instance.

"MR. COPPERNOSE replied, that it was proposed to begin with seven divisions of police of a score each, lettered from A to G inclusive. It was proposed that not more than half this number should be placed on active duty, and that the remainder should be kept on shelves in the police office ready to be called out at a moment's notice.

"THE PRESIDENT, awarding the utmost merit to the ingenious gentleman who had originated the idea, doubted whether the automaton police would quite answer the purpose. He feared that nobleman and gentleman would perhaps require the excitement of thrashing living subjects.

"MR. COPPERNOSE submitted, that as the usual odds in such cases were ten noblemen or gentlemen to one policeman or cab-driver, it could make very little difference in point of excitement whether the policeman or cab-driver were a man or a block. The great advantage would be, that a policeman's limbs might be all knocked off, and yet he would be in a condition to do duty next day. He might even give his evidence next morning with his head in his hand, and give it equally well.

"PROFESSOR MUFF.—Will you allow me to ask you, sir, of what materials it is intended that the magistrates' heads shall be composed?

"MR. COPPERNOSE. — The magistrates will have wooden heads, of course, and they will be made of the toughest and thickest materials than can possibly be obtained.

"PROFESSOR MUFF.—I am quite satisfied. This is a great invention.

"PROFESSOR NOGO.—I see but one objection to it. It appears to me that the magistrates ought to talk.

"MR. COPPERNOSE no sooner heard this suggestion than he touched a small spring in each of the two models of magistrates which were placed upon the table; one of the figures immediately began to exclaim with great volubility that he was sorry to see gentlemen in such a situation, and the other to express a fear that the policeman was intoxicated.

"The section, as with one accord, declared with a shout of applause that the invention was complete; and the President, much excited, retired with Mr. Coppernose to lay it before the council. On his return,

"MR. TICKLE displayed his newly invented spectacles, which enabled the wearer to discern, in very bright colours, objects at a great distance, and rendered him wholly blind to those immediately before him. It was, he said, a most valuable and useful invention, based strictly upon the principle of the human eye.

"THE PRESIDENT required some information upon this point. He had yet to learn that the human eye was remarkable for the peculiarities of which the honourable gentleman had spoken.

"MR. TICKLE was rather astonished to hear this, when the President could not fail to be aware that a large number of most excellent persons and great statesmen could see, with the naked eye, most marvellous horrors on West India plantations, while they could discern nothing whatever in the interior of Manchester cotton mills. He must know, too, with what quickness of perception most people could discover their neighbours' faults, and how very blind they were to their own. If the President differed from the great majority of men in this respect, his eye was a defective one, and it was to assist his vision that these glasses were made.

"MR. BLANK exhibited a model of a fashionable annual, composed of copperplates, gold leaf, and silk boards, and worked entirely by milk and water.

"MR. PROSEE, after examining the machine, declared it to be so ingeniously composed, that he was wholly unable to discover how it went on at all.

"MR. BLANK.—Nobody can, and that is the beauty of it."

SECTION C.—ANATOMY AND MEDICINE. BAR-ROOM, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

President—Dr. Soemup. *Vice-Presidents*—Messrs. Pessell and Mortair.

"DR. GRUMMIDGE stated to the section a most interesting case of monomania, and described the course of treatment he had pursued with perfect success. The patient was a married lady in the middle rank of life, who, having seen another lady at an evening party in a full suit of pearls, was suddenly seized with a desire to possess a similar equipment, although her husband's finances were by no means equal to the necessary outlay. Finding her wish ungratified, she fell sick, and the symptoms soon became so alarming, that he (Dr. Grummidge) was called in. At this period the prominent tokens of the disorder were sullenness, a total indisposition to perform domestic duties, great peevishness, and extreme langour, except when pearls were mentioned, at which times the pulse quickened, the eyes grew brighter, the pupils dilated, and the patient, after various incoherent exclamations, burst into a passion of tears, and exclaimed that nobody cared for her, and that she wished herself dead. Finding that the patient's appetite was affected in the presence of company, he began by ordering a total abstinence from all stimulants, and forbidding any sustenance but weak gruel; he then took twenty ounces of blood, applied a blister under each ear, one upon the chest, and another on the back; having done which, and administered five grains of calomel, he left the patient to her repose. The next day she was somewhat low, but decidedly better, and all appearances of irritation were removed. The next day she improved still further, and on the next again. On the fourth there was some appearance of a return of the old symptoms, which no sooner developed themselves than he administered another dose of calomel, and left strict orders that, unless a decidedly favourable change occurred within two hours, the patient's head should be immediately shaved to the very last curl. From that moment she began to mend, and, in less than four and twenty hours was perfectly restored. She did not now betray the least emotion at the sight or mention of pearls or any other ornaments. She was cheerful and good-humoured, and a most beneficial

change had been effected in her whole temperament and condition.

"MR. PIPKIN, M.R.C.S., read a short but most interesting communication, in which he sought to prove the complete belief of Sir William Courtenay, otherwise Thom, recently shot at Canterbury, in the homœopathic system. The section would bear in mind that one of the homœopathic doctrines was, that infinitesimal doses of any medicine which would occasion the disease under which the patient laboured, supposing him to be in a healthy state, would cure it. Now, it was a remarkable circumstance—proved in the evidence—that the deceased Thom employed a woman to follow him about all day with a pail of water, assuring her that one drop (a purely homœopathic remedy, he section would observe) placed upon his tongue, after death, would restore him. What was the obvious inference? That Thom, who was marching and countermarching in osier-beds and other swampy places, was impressed with a presentiment that he should be drowned; in which case, had his instructions been complied with, he could not fail to have been brought to life again instantly by his own prescription. As it was, if this woman, or any other person, had administered an infinitesimal dose of lead and gunpowder immediately after he fell, he would have recovered forthwith. But unhappily the woman concerned did not possess the power of reasoning by analogy or carrying out a principle, and thus the unfortunate gentleman had been sacrificed to the ignorance of the peasantry.

"SECTION D.—STATISTICS.
OUTHOUSE, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.

President—Mr. Slug. *Vice-Presidents*—Messrs. Noakes and Styles.

"MR. KWAKLEY stated the result of some most ingenious statistical inquiries relative to the difference between the value of the qualification of several Members of Parliament as published to the world, and its real nature and amount. After reminding the section that every Member of Parliament for a town or borough was supposed to possess a clear freehold estate of three hundred pounds per annum, the honourable gentleman excited great amusement and laughter by stating the exact amount of freehold property possessed by a column of legislators, in which he had included himself. It appeared from this table that the amount of such income possessed by each was 0 pounds, 0 shillings, and 0 pence, yielding an average of the same. (Great laughter.) It was pretty well known that there were accommodating gentlemen in the habit of furnishing new Members with temporary qualifications, to the ownership of which they swore solemnly —of course as a mere matter of form. He argued from these *data* that it was wholly unnecessary for Members of Parliament to possess any property at all, especially as when they had none the public could get them so much cheaper.

"SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION E.—UMBUGOLOGY AND DITCHWATERISTICS.

President—Mr. Grub. *Vice-Presidents*—Messrs. Dull and Dummy.

"A PAPER was read by the Secretary descriptive of a bay pony with one eye, which had been seen by the author standing in a butcher's cart at the coner of Newgate Market. The communication described the author of the paper as having, in the prosecution of a mercantile pursuit, betaken himself one Saturday morning last summer from Somers Town to Cheapside, in the course of which expedition he had beheld the extraordinary appearance above described. The pony had one distinct eye, and it had been pointed out to him by his friend Captain Blunderbore, of the Horse Marines, who assisted the author in his search, that whenever he winked this eye he whisked his tail (possibly to drive the flies off), but that he always winked and whisked at the same time. The animal was lean, spavined, and tottering; and the author proposed to constitute it of the family of *Fitfordogsmeataurius*. It certainly did occur to him that there was no case on record of a pony with one clearly-defined and distinct organ of vision, winking and whisking at the same moment.

"MR. Q. J. SNUFFLETOFFLE had heard of a pony winking his eye, and likewise of a pony whisking his tail, but whether they were two ponies or the same pony he could not undertake positively to say. At all events, he was acquainted with no authenticated instance of a simultaneous winking and whisking, and he really could not but doubt the existence of such a marvellous pony in opposition to all those natural laws by which ponies were governed. Referring, however, to the mere question of his one organ of vision, might he suggest the possibility of this pony having been literally half asleep at the time he was seen, and having closed only one eye.

"THE PRESIDENT observed that, whether the pony was half asleep or fast asleep, there could be no doubt that the association was wide awake, and therefore that they had better get the business over, and go to dinner. He had certainly never seen anything analogous to this pony, but he was not prepared to doubt its existence; for he had seen many queerer ponies in his time, though he did not pretend to have seen any more remarkable donkeys than the other gentlemen around him.

"PROFESSOR JOHN KETCH was then called upon to exhibit the skull of the late Mr. Greenacre, which he produced from a blue

bag, remarking, on being invited to make any observations that occurred to him, 'that he 'd pound it as that 'ere 'spectable section had never seed a more gamerer cove nor he vos.'

"A most animated discussion upon this interesting relic ensued; and, some difference of opinion arising respecting the real character of the deceased gentleman, Mr. Blubb delivered a lecture upon the cranium before him, clearly showing that Mr. Greenacre possessed the organ of destructiveness to a most unusual extent, with a most remarkable development of the organ of carveativeness. Sir Hookham Snivey was proceeding to combat this opinion, when Professor Ketch suddenly interrupted the proceedings by exclaiming with great excitement of manner, 'Walker!'

"THE PRESIDENT begged to call the learned gentleman to order.

"PROFESSOR KETCH.—Order be blowed! you've got the wrong un, I tell you. It ain't no e'd at all; it 's a coker-nut as my brother-in-law has been a-carvin', to hornament his new baked tatur stall wots a-comin' down 'ere vile the 'sociation's in the town. Hand over, vill yer?

"With these words, Professor Ketch hastily repossessed himself of the cocoa-nut, and drew forth the skull, in mistake for which he had exhibited it. A most interesting conversation ensued; but as there appeared some doubt ultimately whether the skull was Mr. Greenacre's, or a hospital patient's, or a pauper's, or a man's, or a woman's, or a monkey's, no particular result was obtained."

"I cannot," says our talented correspondent in conclusion, "I cannot close my account of these gigantic researches and sublime and noble triumphs without repeating a *bon mot* of Professor Woodensconce's, which shows how the greatest minds may occasionally unbend when truth can be represented to listening ears, clothed in an attractive and playful form. I was standing by, when, after a week of feasting and feeding, that learned gentleman, accompanied by the whole body of wonderful men, entered the hall yesterday, where a sumptuous dinner was prepared, where the richest wines sparkled on the board, and fat bucks—propitiatory sacrifices to learning—sent forth their savoury odours. 'Ah!' said Professor Woodensconce, rubbing his hands, 'this is what we meet for; this is what inspires us; this is what keeps us together, and beckons us onward; this is the *spread* of science, and a glorious spread it is.'"

THE
LOVING BALLAD OF LORD BATEMAN.

I.

LORD BATEMAN vos a noble lord,
A noble lord of high degree;
He shipped his-self all aboard of a ship,
Some foreign country for to see.[1] *

II.

He sail-ed east, he sail-ed vest,
Until he come to famed Turk-ey,
Vere he vos taken and put to prisin,
Until his life was quite wea-ry.

III.

All in this prisin there grew a tree—
O, there it grew so stout and strong!
Vere he vos chain-ed all by the middle,
Until his life vos almost gone.

IV.

This Turk[2] he had one ounly darter,
The fairest my two eyes e'er see;
She steeled the keys of her father's prisin,
And swore Lord Bateman she would let go free.

V.

O, she took him to her father's cellar,
And guv to him the best of vine;
And ev'ry holth she dronk unto him
Vos "I vish, Lord Batemun, as you vos mine!" [3]

VI.

"O, have you got houses, have you got land?
And does Northumberland belong to thee?
And what would you give to the fair young lady
As out of prisin vould let you go free?"

VII.

"O, I 've got houses, and I 've got land,
And half Northumberland belongs to me;
And I will give it all to the fair young lady
As out of prisin vould let me go free."

VIII.

"O, in sevin long years, I 'll make a wow
For sevin long years, and keep it strong,[4]
That if you 'll ved no other voman,
O, I vill v-e-ed no other man."

IX.

O, she took him to her father's harbour,
And guv to him a ship of fame,
Saying, "Farevell, farevell to you, Lord Bateman!
I fear I ne-e-ever shall see you agen."

X.

Now sevin long years is gone and past,
And fourteen days, vell known to me;[5]
She pack-ed up all her gay clouthing,
And sware Lord Bateman she vould go see.

XI.

O, ven she arrived at Lord Bateman's castle
How bouldly then she rang the bell;
"Who 's there? who 's there?" cries the proud young porter,
"O come, unto me pray quickly tell."

XII.

"O, is this here Lord Bateman's castle?
And is his lordship here vithin?"
"O yes! O yes!" cries the proud young porter;
"He 's just now takin' his young bride in."

XIII.

"O, bid him to send me a slice of bread,
And a bottle of the wery best vine,
And not forgettin' the fair young lady
As did release him ven close confine."

XIV.

O, avay and avay vent this proud young porter,
O, avay and avay and avay vent he,[6]
Until he come to Lord Bateman's charmber,
Ven he vent down on his bended knee.

XV.

"Vot news, vot news, my proud young porter?[7]
Vot news, vot news? come tell to me!"
"O, there is the fairest young lady
As ever my two eyes did see.

XVI.

"She has got rings on ev'ry finger,
And on one finger she has got three;
Vith as much gay gould about her middle
As vould buy half Northumberlee.

XVII.

"O, she bids you send her a slice of bread
And a bottle of the wery best vine,
And not forgettin' the fair young lady
As did release you ven close confine."

XVIII.

Lord Bateman then in passion flew,
And broke his sword in splinters three,[8]
Saying, "I will give half my father's land
If so be as Sophia[9] has crossed the sea.

XIX.

Then up and spoke this young bride's mother,
Who never vos heerd to speak so free;[10]
Saying, "You 'll not forget my ounly darter,
If so be as Sophia has crossed the sea."

* For the notes to this beautiful poem, see page 106.

XX.

"O, it 's true I made a bride of your darter,
But she 's neither the better nor the worse for me;
She came to me with a horse and saddle,
But she may go home in a coach and three."

XXI.

Lord Bateman then prepared another marriage,
With both their hearts so full of glee; [11]
Saying, "I vill roam no more to foreign countries
Now that Sophia has crossed the sea."

NOTES.

[1] *Some foreign country for to see.*

The reader is here in six words artfully made acquainted with Lord Bateman's character and temperament. Of a roving, wandering, and unsettled spirit, his lordship left his native country, bound he knew not whither. *Some* foreign country he wished to see, and that was the extent of his desire. Any foreign country would answer his purpose—all foreign countries were alike to him. He was a citizen of the world, and upon the world of waters, sustained by the daring and reckless impulses of his heart, he boldly launched. For anything, from pitch and toss to manslaughter, his lordship was prepared. Lord Bateman's character at this time, and his expedition, would appear to have borne a striking resemblance to those of Lord Byron—

"His goblets brimmed with every costly wine,
And all that mote to luxury invite,
Without a sigh he left to cross the brine,
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass earth's central line."—*Childe Harold*, Canto I.

[2] *This Turk he had, &c.*

The poet has here, by that bold license which only genius can venture on, surmounted the extreme difficulty of introducing any particular Turk, by assuming a foregone conclusion in the reader's mind, and adverting in a casual, careless way to a Turk unknown as to an old acquaintance. "*This* Turk he had—" We have heard of no Turk before, and yet this familiar introduction satisfies us at once that we know him well. He was a pirate, no doubt, of a cruel and savage disposition, entertaining a hatred of the Christian race, and accustomed to garnish his trees and vines with such stray professors of Christianity as happened to fall into his hands. "This Turk he had—" is a masterstroke—a truly Shakespearian touch. There are few things like it in the language.

And ev'ry holth she dronk unto him
Vos "I vish, Lord Bateman, as you vos mine!"

A most affecting illustration of the sweetest simplicity, the purest artlessness, and holiest affections of woman's gentle nature. Bred up among the rough and savage crowds which thronged her father's lawless halls, and meeting with no responsive or kindred spirit among those fierce barbarians (many of whom, however, touched by her surpassing charms, though insensible to her virtues and mental endowments, had vainly sought her hand in marriage), this young creature had spent the greatest part of her life in the solitude of her own apartments, or in contemplating the charms of Nature arrayed in all the luxury of Eastern voluptuousness. At length she hears from an aged and garrulous attendant, her only female adviser (for her mother died when she was yet an infant), of the sorrows and sufferings of the Christian captive. Urged by pity and womanly sympathy, she repairs to his prison to succour and console him. She supports his feeble and tottering steps to her father's cellar, recruits his exhausted frame with copious draughts of sparkling wine, and when his dim eye brightens, and his pale cheek becomes flushed with the glow of returning health and animation, she —unaccustomed to disguise or concealment, and being by nature all openness and truth— gives vent to the feelings which now thrill her maiden heart for the first time in the rich gush of unspeakable love, tenderness, and devotion—

"I vish, Lord Bateman, as you vos mine!"

[4] *O, in sevin long years, I'll make a wow*
For sevin long years, and keep it strong.

Love has converted the tender girl into a majestic heroine. She can not only make "a wow," but she can "keep it strong." She feels all the dignity of truth and love swelling in her bosom. With the view of possessing herself of the real state of Lord Bateman's

affections, and with no sordid or mercenary motives, she has inquired of that nobleman what are his means of subsistence, and whether *all* Northumberland belongs to him. His lordship has rejoined, with a noble regard for truth, that *half* Northumberland is his, and that he will give it freely to the fair young lady who will release him from his dungeon. She, being thus assured of his regard and esteem, rejects all idea of pecuniary reward, and offers to be a party to a solemn wow—to be kept strong on both sides—that, if for seven years he will remain a bachelor, she for the like period will remain a maid. The contract is made, and the lovers are solemnly contracted.

[5] *Now sevin long years is gone and past,*
And fourteen days, vell known to me.

In this may be recognized, though in a minor degree, the same gifted hand that portrayed the Mussulman, the pirate, the father, and the bigot in two words. The time is gone, the historian knows it, and that is enough for the reader. This is the dignity of history very strikingly exemplified.

[6] *Avay and avay vent this proud young porter,*
Avay and avay and avay vent he.

Nothing perhaps could be more ingeniously contrived to express the vastness of Lord Bateman's family mansion than this remarkable passage. The proud young porter had to thread courts, corridors, galleries, and staircases innumerable before he could penetrate to those exquisite apartments in which Lord Bateman was wont to solace his leisure hours with the most refined pleasures of his time. We behold him hastening to the presence of his lord; the repetition of the word "avay" causes us to feel the speed with which he hastens. At length he arrives. Does he appear before the chief with indecent haste? Is he described as rushing madly into his presence to impart his message? No! a different atmosphere surrounds that remarkable man. Even this proud young porter is checked in his impetuous career, which lasted only—

"Until he come to Lord Bateman's charmber,
Ven he vent down on his bended knee."

Lord Bateman's eye is upon him, and he quails.

[7] *Vot news, vot news, my proud young porter?*

A pleasant condescension on the part of his lordship, showing that he recognized the stately youth, and no less stately pride of office which characterized his follower, and that he was acquainted with the distinguishing appellation which he appears to have borne in the family.

[8] *And broke his sword in splinters three.*

Exemplifying, in a highly poetical and striking manner, the force of Lord Bateman's love, which he would seem to have kept strong as his "wow." We have beheld him patient in confinement, descending to no base murmurings against fortune, even when chained by the middle to a tree, with the prospect of ending his days in that ignominious and unpleasant position. He has borne all this and a great deal more. Seven years and a fortnight have elapsed, and, at last, on the mere mention of the fair young lady he falls into a perfect frenzy, and breaks his sword—the faithful partner and companion of his glory—into three splinters. Antiquarians differ respecting the intent and meaning of this ceremony, which has been construed and interpreted in many different ways. The strong probability is that is was done "for luck;" and yet Lord Bateman should have been superior to the prejudices of the vulgar.

[9] *If so be as Sophia—*

So called, doubtless, from the Mosque of St. Sophia, at Constantinople; her father having professed the Mahommedan religion.

[10] *Then up and spoke this young bride's mother,*
Who never vos heerd to speak so free.

This is an exquisite touch of nature which most married men, whether of noble or plebeian blood, will quickly recognize. During the whole of her daughter's courtship the good old lady had scarcely spoken, save by expressive smiles and looks of approval. But now that her object is gained, and her daughter fast married (as she thinks), she suddenly assumes quite a new tone, "and never vos heerd to speak so free." It would be difficult for poetry to comprehend anything more strictly true and lifelike than this.

[11] *With both their hearts so full of glee.*

If anything could add to the grace and beauty of the poem, it would be this most satisfactory and agreeable conclusion. At the time of the foreign lady's arrival on the shores of England, we find Lord Bateman in the disagreeable dilemma of having contracted another marriage; to which step his lordship has doubtless been impelled by despair of ever recovering his lost Sophia, and a natural anxiety not to die without leaving an heir to his estate. The ceremony had been performed, the church has done its office, the bride and her mamma have taken possession of the castle, when the lost Sophia suddenly presents herself. An ordinary man would have been overwhelmed by such a complication of perplexities—not so Lord Bateman. Master of the human heart, he appeals to

feminine ambition and love of display, and reminding the young lady that she came to him on a saddle-horse (with her revered parent following, no doubt, on foot behind), offers to bestow upon her a coach and three. The young lady closes with the proposition; her august mother, having brought it about by her freedom of speech, makes no objection. Lord Bateman being a nobleman of great power, and having plenty of superfluous wealth to bestow upon the Church, orders another marriage, and boldly declares the first one to be a nullity. Thereupon, "another marriage" is immediately prepared, and the piece closes with a picture of general happiness and hilarity.

THE VILLAGE COQUETTES

A COMIC OPERA

In Two Acts

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

Dedication

TO

J. P. HARLEY, ESQ.

My Dear Sir,—

My dramatic bantlings are no sooner born than you father them. You have made my "Strange Gentleman" exclusively your own; you have adopted Martin Stokes with equal readiness; and you still profess your willingness to do the same kind office for all future scions of the same stock.

I dedicate to you the first play I ever published, and you made for me the first play I ever produced; the balance is in your favour, and I am afraid it will remain so.

That you may long contribute to the amusement of the public, and long be spared to shed a lustre, by the honour and integrity of your private life, on the profession which for many years you have done so much to uphold, is the sincere and earnest wish of,

My dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully,

Charles Dickens.

December 15, 1836.

PREFACE.

"Either the honourable gentleman is in the right, or he is not," is a phrase in very common use within the walls of Parliament. This drama may have a plot, or it may not; and the songs may be poetry, or they may not; and the whole affair from beginning to end may be great nonsense, or it may not, just as the honourable gentleman or lady who reads it may happen to think. So, retaining his own private and particular opinion upon the subject (an opinion which he formed upwards of a year ago, when he wrote the piece), the Author leaves every such gentleman or lady to form his or hers as he or she may think proper, without saying one word to influence or conciliate them.

All he wishes to say is this:—that he hopes Mr. Braham, and all the performers who assisted in the representation of this opera, will accept his warmest thanks for the interest they evinced in it from its very first rehearsal, and from their zealous efforts in his behalf—efforts which have crowned it with a degree of success far exceeding his most sanguine anticipations; of which no form of words could speak his acknowledgment.

It is needless to add that the *libretto* of an opera must be, to a certain extent, a mere vehicle for the music, and that it is scarcely fair or reasonable to judge it by those strict rules of criticism which would be justly applicable to a five-act tragedy or a finished comedy.

THE VILLAGE COQUETTES.

Dramatis Personæ.

Squire Norton	Mr. Braham.
The Hon. Sparkins Flam (*his friend*)	Mr. Forester.
Old Benson (*a small farmer*)	Mr. Strickland.
Mr. Martin Stokes (*a very small farmer with a very large circle of particular friends*)	Mr. Harley.
George Edmunds (*betrothed to* Lucy)	Mr. Bennett.
Young Benson	Mr. J. Parry.
John Maddox (*attached to* Rose)	Mr. Gardner.
Lucy Benson	Miss Rainforth.
Rose (*her cousin*)	Miss J. Smith.

Time occupied in Representation—Two hours and a half.

Period—*The Autumn of* 1729. | Scene—*An English Village.*

(The passages marked with inverted commas are omitted in the representation.)

Act I.—Scene I.

A rick-yard, with a cart laden with corn-sheaves. John Maddox *and* Labourers *unloading it. Implements of husbandry, etc., lie scattered about. A gate on one side.* John Maddox *is in the cart, and dismounts at the conclusion of the chorus.*

Round.

Hail to the merry Autumn days, when yellow corn-fields shine
Far brighter than the costly cup that holds the monarch's wine;
Hail to the merry harvest-time, the gayest of the year,
The time of rich and bounteous crops, rejoicing, and good cheer!
'T is pleasant on a fine Spring morn to see the buds expand,
'T is pleasant in the Summer-time to view the teeming land,
'T is pleasant on a Winter's night to crouch around the blaze;
But what are joys like these, my boys, to Autumn's merry days?
Then hail to merry Autumn days, when yellow corn-fields shine
Far brighter than the costly cup that holds the monarch's wine;
And hail to merry harvest-time, the gayest of the year,
The time of rich and bounteous crops, rejoicing, and good cheer!

Maddox. Well done, my lads; a good day's work, a warm one. Here, Tom (*to* Villager), run into the house and ask Miss Rose to send out some beer for the men, and a jug for Master Maddox; and d'ye hear, Tom? tell Miss Rose it 's a fine evening, and that if she 'll step out herself it 'll do her good, and do me good into the bargain. (*Exit* Villager.) That 's right, my lads, stow these sheaves away before the sun goes down. Let 's begin fresh in the morning, without any leavings of to-day. By this time to-morrow the last load will have been carried, and then for our Harvest Home!

Villagers. Hurrah! hurrah!

[*First four lines of Round repeated.*

Enter Martin Stokes.

Martin. Very good! very good indeed! Always sing while you work—capital custom. I always do when I work, and I never work at all when I can help it—another capital custom. John, old fellow, how are you?—give us your hand,—hearty squeeze,—good shake,—capital custom number three. Fine dry weather for the harvest, John. Talking of that, I 'm dry too. You always give away plenty of beer here,—capital custom number four. Trouble you for the loan of that can, John.

John (*taking it from the cart*). Here 's the can, but as to there being anything good in it, it 's as dry as the weather, and as empty as you. Hoo! hoo! (*laughing boisterously, is suddenly checked by a look from* Martin).

Martin. Hallo, John, hallo! I have often told you before, Mr. Maddox, that I don't consider you in a situation of life which entitles you to make jokes, far less to laugh at 'em. If you must make a joke, do it solemnly and respectfully. If *I* laugh, that 's quite enough, and it must be far more gratifying to your feelings than any contortions of that enormous mouth of yours.

John. Well, perhaps, as you say, I oughtn't

to make jokes till I arrive, like you, at the dignity of a small piece of ground and a cottage; but I must laugh at a joke sometimes.

MARTIN. Must, must you? Rather presuming fellow, this Maddox (*aside*).

JOHN. Why, when you make one of them rum jokes of yours—'cod! I must laugh then.

MARTIN. Oh, ah! you may laugh then, John; always laugh at my jokes — capital custom number five; no harm in that, because you can't help it, you know. Knowing fellow, though (*aside*).

JOHN. Remember that joke about the old cow as you made five years ago?—'cod, that was a joke! Hoo! hoo! hoo! I never shall forget that joke. I never see a cow to this day without laughing.

MARTIN. Ha! ha! ha! Very good—very good! Devilish clever fellow this (*aside*). Well, Jack, you behave yourself well all the evening, and perhaps I may make that joke again before the day 's out.

JOHN. Thankee. That 's very kind.

MARTIN. Don't mention it! don't mention it! But I say, John, I called to speak to you about more important matters. Something wrong here, ain't there? (*mysteriously*).

JOHN. Wrong? You 're always fancying something wrong.

MARTIN. Fancying!—come, I like that. I say, why don't you keep your harvest home at home to-morrow night? Why are we all to go up to the Squire's, as if we couldn't be merry in Benson's barn? And why is the Squire always coming down here looking after some people and cutting out other people?—ain't that wrong? Where 's George Edmunds old Benson 's so fond of, and that Lucy *was* fond of too, once upon a time, eh? Ain't that wrong? Where 's your sweetheart Rose? Ain't her walkings, and gigglings, and whisperings, and simperings with the Squire's friend, Mr. Sparkins Flam, the talk of the whole place? Nothing wrong there, eh? (MADDOX *goes up.*) Had him there; I knew there was something wrong. I 'll keep a sharp eye upon these doings, for I don't like these newfangled customs. It was all very well, in the old time, to see the Squire's father come riding among the people on his bay cob, nodding to the common folks, shaking hands with me, and all that sort of thing; but when you change the old country gentleman into a dashing fop from London, and the steady old steward into Mr. Sparkins Flam, the case is very different. We shall see; but if I might tell Miss Lucy Benson a bit of my mind, I should say, "Stick to an independent young fellow like George Edmunds, and, depend upon it, you will be happier than you would with all the show and glitter of a squire's lady." And I should say to Rose, very solemn, "Rose——"

[ROSE *enters unperceived, with beer.* "Rose——"

ROSE (*starting*). Lord bless us! What a hollow voice! Why, it 's Mr. Stokes! What on earth is the matter with him?

MARTIN (*not seeing her*). Rose, if you would be happy and contented, if you would escape destruction, shield yourself from dangerous peril, and save yourself from horrid ruin——

ROSE. What dreadful words!

MARTIN. You will at once, and without delay, bestow your hand on John Maddox; or if you would aspire to a higher rank in life and a loftier station in society, you will cultivate the affections of Mr. Stokes—Mr. Martin Stokes—a young gentleman of great mental attractions and very considerable personal charms; leaving the false and fatal Flam to the ignominious fate which——

ROSE. Why, Mr. Stokes!

MARTIN. Ignominious fate which——

ROSE. Dear! he must be in a fit! Mr. Stokes!

MARTIN. Eh? Ah! Miss Rose! It 's you, is it?

ROSE. Me? Yes, and here have I been waiting all this time, while you were talking nonsense to yourself. Here, I have brought you some beer.

MARTIN. Oh, Miss Rose! if you go on in this way you 'll bring us to our bier, instead of bringing our beer to us. (*Looking round*). You may laugh if you want to very much, John.

JOHN. Hoo! hoo! hoo!

ROSE. Be quiet, oaf! And pray, sir (*to* MARTIN) to what may your most humorous observation refer?

MARTIN. Why, my dear Miss Rose, you know my way—always friendly—always thinking of the welfare of those I like best, and very seldom receiving my gratitude in return.

ROSE. I know you very seldom deserve any.

MARTIN. Ah! that 's exactly my meaning, that 's the way, you see. The moment I begin to throw out a hint to one of my dear friends, out comes some unkind and rude remark; but I bear it all for their sakes. I won't allow you to raise my ill-nature—you shan't stop me. I was going to say—don't you think—now *don't* you think—that you—don't be angry—make rather—don't colour up—*rather* too free with Mr. Sparkins Flam?

ROSE. *I* make free with Mr. Sparkins Flam? Why, you odious, insolent creature!

MARTIN. Ah, of course—always the way—I told you so; I knew you 'd say that.

ROSE. And you, John, you mean-spirited scarecrow, will you stand there and see me insulted by an officious, impertinent——

MARTIN. Go on, go on! (*A gun fired.*) Hallo! (*looking off*) here they are—the Squire and Mr. Sparkins Flam.

ROSE (*hastily adjusting her dress*). My goodness! Mr. Spar—run, John, there 's a dear!

JOHN (*not moving*). Very dear, I daresay.

ROSE. Run and tell my uncle and Lucy that Mr. Spar—I mean, that the Squire's coming.

JOHN. I wouldn't ha' gone anyhow; but nobody need go now, for here they are. Now, I'm extinguished for the rest of the day.

Enter through the gate SQUIRE NORTON *and* MR SPARKINS FLAM, *dressed for sporting, with guns, etc., and two* Gamekeepers. *On the other side,* OLD BENSON *and* LUCY. MARTIN, *during the whole scene, thrusts himself in the* SQUIRE'S *way to be taken notice of.*

SQUIRE (*to* Gamekeeper, *and putting down his gun*). Take the birds into the house. Benson: we have had a good day's sport, but a tiring one; and as the load is heavy for my fellows, you 'll let our game remain here as it is. I could not offer it to a better friend.

BENSON. Your honour's very good, but——

SQUIRE. Nay, you make a merit of receiving the smallest favour.

BENSON. Not a merit of receiving, nor a boast of refusing it; but a man in humble station should be cautious how he receives favours from those above him, which he never asks, and can never return. I have had too many such favours forced upon me by your honour lately, and would rather not increase the number.

SQUIRE. But such a trifle——

BENSON. A trifle from an equal, but a condescension from a superior. Let your men carry your birds up to the Hall, sir, or if they are tired, mine shall do it for them, and welcome. [*Retires up.*

FLAM (*aside*). Swine and independence! Leather breeches and liberty!

SQUIRE. At least I may be permitted to leave a few brace, as a present to the ladies. Lucy, I hope you will not object.

[*Crosses to her.*

LUCY. I feel muchfl attered by your honour's politeness, and—and—and——

ROSE. My cousin means to say, sir, that we 're very much obliged to your honour and Mr. Flam for your politeness, and that we are very willing to accept of anything, your honour.

FLAM. Condescending little savage! (*aside*)

SQUIRE. You have spoken well, both for yourself and your cousin. Flam, this is Rose—the pretty little Rose, you know.

FLAM. Know! Can I ever forget the charming Rose—the beautiful—the—the—(*aside*)—the cabbage Rose!

SQUIRE (*aside*). Keep that girl engaged while I talk to the other one.

ROSE. Oh, Mr. Flam!

FLAM. Oh, Miss Rose! [*He salutes her.*

BENSON. Your honour will not object to taste our ale after your day's sport. The afternoon is fresh and cool, and 't will be pleasant here in the air. Here, Ben, Thomas, bring mugs here—quick—quick—and a seat for his honour.

[*Exeunt* BENSON, MADDOX, *etc.*

SQUIRE. It will be delightful, won't it, Flam?

FLAM. Inexpressibly charming! (*Aside*). An mateur tea-garden.

[*He retires a little up with* ROSE, *she coquetting.*

SQUIRE (*to* LUCY). And in such society how much the pleasure will be enhanced!

LUCY. Your honour knows I ought not to listen to you. George Edmunds would——

SQUIRE. Edmunds! a rustic! You cannot love that Edmunds, Lucy. Forget him; remember your own worth.

LUCY. I wish I could, sir. My heart will tell me, though, weak and silly as I am, that I cannot better show the consciousness of my own worth than by remaining true to my first and only love. Your honour rouses my foolish pride; but real true love is not to be forgotten easily.

Song.—LUCY.

Love is not a feeling to pass away
Like the balmy breath of a summer day;
It is not—it cannot be—laid aside;
It is not a thing to forget or hide.
It clings to my heart, ah, woe is me!
As the ivy clings to the old oak-tree.

Love is not a passion of earthly mould,
As a thirst for honour, or fame, or gold;
For when all these wishes have died away,
The deep strong love of a brighter day,
Though nourished in secret, consumes the more,
As the slow rust eats to the iron's core.

Re-enter OLD BENSON, JOHN MADDOX, *and* Villagers, *with jugs, seats, etc.;* SQUIRE NORTON *seats himself next* LUCY, *and* ROSE *contrives to sit next* MR. SPARKINS FLAM, *which* MARTIN *and* MADDOX *in vain endeavour to prevent.*

SQUIRE. Flam, you know these honest people? all tenants of my own.

FLAM. Oh, yes, I know 'em — pleasant fellows! This—this is—what 's his name?

BENSON—Martin, sir—Martin Stokes.

MARTIN (*starting forward*). A—a—Mr. Stokes at your service, sir,—how do you do, sir? (*Shaking* FLAM *by the hand while speaking*). I hope you are quite well, sir; I am delighted to see you looking so well, sir. I hope your majestic father and your fashionable mother are in the enjoyment of good health, sir. I should have spoken to you before, sir, only you have been so very much engaged, that I couldn't succeed in catching your honourable eye;—very happy to see you, sir.

FLAM. Ah. Pleasant fellow, this Martin—agreeable manners—no reserve about him.

MARTIN. Sir, you do me a great deal of honour. Mr. Norton, sir, I have the honour of drinking your remarkably good health—I admire you, sir.

SQUIRE (*laughing*). Sir, I feel highly gratified, I 'm sure.

MARTIN (*aside*). He 's gratified! I flatter myself I have produced a slight impression here. [*Drinks.*

FLAM (*turns round, sees* MADDOX). Ah, Ox!

JOHN. *Ox!* Who do you call Ox? Maddox is my name.

FLAM. Oh, mad Ox? True—I forgot the lunacy. Your health, mad Ox.

SQUIRE (*rising and coming forward*). Come, Flam, another glass. Here, friends, is success to our harvest home.

MARTIN. Hear, hear. A most appropriate toast most eloquently given—a charming sentiment delightfully expressed. Gentlemen (*to* Villagers), allow me to have the pleasure of proposing Mr. Norton, if you please. Take your time from me (*he gives the time, and they all cheer*). Mr. Norton, sir, I beg to call upon you for a song.

Song.—SQUIRE NORTON.

That very wise head, old Æsop, said
The bow should be sometimes loose;
Keep it tight for ever, the string you sever:
Let 's turn his old moral to use.
The world forget, and let us yet,
The glass our spirits buoying,
Revel to-night in those moments bright
Which make life worth enjoying.
The cares of the day, old moralists say,
Are quite enough to perplex one;
Then drive to-day's sorrow away till to-morrow,
And then put it off till the next one.
Chorus.—The cares of the day, etc.

Some plodding old crones—the heartless drones!
Appeal to my cool reflection,
And ask me whether such nights can ever
Charm sober recollection.
Yes, yes! I cry, I 'll grieve or die
When those I love forsake me;
But while friends so dear surround me here,
Let care if he can o'ertake me.
Chorus.—The cares of the day, etc.

During the chorus SQUIRE NORTON *and* FLAM *resume their guns and go up the stage followed by the various characters. The chorus concludes as the scene closes.*

SCENE II.

An open spot near the village, with stile and pathway leading to the church, which is seen in the distance. GEORGE EDMUNDS *enters, with a stick in his hand.*

EDMUNDS. How thickly the fallen leaves lie scattered at the feet of that old row of elm-trees! When I first met Lucy on this spot, it was a fine spring day, and those same leaves were trembling in the sunshine, as green and bright as if their beauty would last for ever. What a contrast they present now, and how true an emblem of my own lost happiness!

Song.—GEORGE EDMUNDS.

Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here,
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!
How like the hopes of childhood's day
Thick clust'ring on the bough,
How like those hopes in their decay,
How faded are they now!
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here,
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, that fly before the gale,
Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, ye tell a mournful tale
Of love once true, and friends once kind,
And happy moments fled,
Dispersed by every breath of wind,
Forgotten, changed, or dead!
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here,
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

An hour past the old time, and still no Lucy! 'T is useless lingering here. I 'll wait no longer. A female crossing the meadow. 'Tis Rose, the bearer of a letter or message, perhaps.

Enter ROSE (*she avoids him*).

EDMUNDS. No? Then I will see Lucy at once without a moment's delay. [*Going.*

ROSE. No, no; you can't. (*Aside*). There'll certainly be bloodshed. I am quite certain Mr. Flam will kill him. He offered me, with the most insinuating speeches, to cut John's throat at a moment's notice, and when the Squire complimented him on being a good shot, he said he should like to "bag" the whole male population of the village. (*To him*). You can't see her.

EDMUNDS. Not see her, and she at home! Were you instructed to say this, Rose?

ROSE. I say it because I know you can't see her. She is not well, and—and——

EDMUNDS. And Mr. Norton is there, you would say.

ROSE. Mr. Norton!

EDMUNDS. Yes, Mr. Norton. Was he not there last evening? Was he not there the evening before? Is he not there at this moment?

Enter JOHN MADDOX.

JOHN. There at this moment? Of course he is.

ROSE (*aside*). John here?

JOHN. Of course he is; of course he was there last night; and of course he was there the evening before. He 's always there, and so is his bosom friend and confidential demon,

Mr. Sparkins Flam. Oh, George! we 're injured men, both of us.

EDMUNDS. Heartless girl! [*Retires up.*

JOHN (*to* ROSE). Faithless person!

ROSE. Don't call me a person.

JOHN. You *are* a person, perjured, treacherous, and deceiving! Oh, George! if you had seen what I have seen to-day. Soft whisperings and loving smiles, gentle looks and encouraging sighs — such looks and sighs as used once upon a time to be bestowed on us. George! if you had seen the Squire making up to Lucy, and Rose making up to Flam;— but I am very glad you did not see it, George, very. It would have broken your heart, as it has broken mine. Oh, Rose! could you break my heart?

ROSE. I could break your head with the greatest pleasure, you mischief-making booby; and if you don't make haste to wherever you 're going, somebody that I know of will certainly do so, very quickly.

JOHN. Will he, will he? Your friend Mr. Flam, I suppose. Let him—that 's all: let him! [*Retires up.*

ROSE. Oh! I 'll let him; you needn't be afraid of my interfering. Dear, dear! I wish Mr. Flam would come, for I will own, notwithstanding what graver people may say, that I enjoy a little flirtation as much as any one.

Song.—ROSE.

Some folks who have grown old and sour
Say love does nothing but annoy.
The fact is, they have had their hour,
So envy what they can't enjoy.
I like the glance—I like the sigh—
That does of ardent passion tell;
If some folks were as young as I,
I 'm sure they 'd like it quite as well.

Old maiden aunts so hate the men,
So well know how wives are harried,
It makes them sad—not jealous—when
They see their poor dear nieces married.
All men are fair and false, they know,
And with deep sighs they assail 'em;
It 's so long since they tried men, though,
I rather think their mem'ries fail 'em.

Here comes Mr. Flam: you 'd better go, John. I know you 'll be murdered.

JOHN. Here I shall stop. Let him touch me, and he shall feel the weight of my indignation.

Enter FLAM.

FLAM. Ah, my charmer! Punctual to my time, you see, my sweet little Damask Rose!

JOHN (*coming down*). A great deal more like a monthly one—constantly changing, and gone the moment you wear it.

ROSE. Impertinent creature!

FLAM. Who is this poetical cauliflower?

JOHN. Don't pretend not to know me. You know who I am well enough.

FLAM. As I live, it 's the Ox—retire, Ox, to your pasture, and don't rudely disturb the cooing of the doves. Go and graze, Ox.

JOHN. Suppose I choose to remain here, what then?

FLAM. Why, then you must be driven off, mad Ox. (*To* ROSE). Who is that other grasshopper?

ROSE. Hush, hush! for Heaven's sake don't let him hear you! It 's young Edmunds.

FLAM. Young Edmunds? And who the devil is young Edmunds? For beyond the natural inference that young Edmunds is the son of old Edmunds, curse me if the fame of young Edmunds has ever reached my ears.

ROSE (*in a low tone*). It 's Lucy's former lover, whom she has given up for the Squire.

FLAM. The rejected cultivator?

ROSE. The same.

FLAM. Ah! I guessed as much from his earthy appearance. But, my darling Rose, I must speak with you—I must (*putting his arm round her waist, sees* JOHN). Good bye, Ox!

JOHN. Good bye!

FLAM. Pleasant walk to you, Ox!

JOHN (*not moving*). Thank 'ee. Same to you!

FLAM. That other clodpole must not stay here either.

ROSE. Yes, yes! he neither sees nor hears us. Pray let him remain.

FLAM (*to* JOHN). You understand, Ox, that it is my wish that you forthwith retire and graze—or, in other words, that you at once, and without delay, betake yourself to the farm, or the devil, or any other place where you are in your element, and won't be in the way.

JOHN. Oh, yes, I understand that.

FLAM. Very well; then the sooner you create a scarcity of such animals in the market, the better. Now, my dear Rose (*puts his arm round her waist again*). Are you gone, Ox?

JOHN. No.

FLAM. Are you going?

JOHN. By no means.

FLAM. This insolence is not to be borne.

ROSE. Oh, pray don't hurt him — pray don't. Go away, you stupid creature, if you don't want to be ruined.

JOHN. That 's just the very advice I would give you, Rose. Do *you* go away, if you don't want to be ruined. As for me, this is a public place, and here I 'll remain just as long as I think proper.

FLAM (*quitting* ROSE, *and advancing towards him*). You will?

JOHN. I will.

ROSE. Oh, dear, dear! I knew he 'd be murdered all along. I was quite certain of it.

JOHN. Don't frown and scowl at me—it won't do—it only makes me smile, and when you talk of insolence and put my blood up, I tell you at once that I am not to be bullied.

FLAM. Bullied?

JOHN. Ay, bullied was the word—bullied by a coward, if you like that better.

FLAM. Coward! (*Seizes his gun by the barrel, and aims a blow at him with the butt-end.* EDMUNDS *rushes forward and strikes it up with his stick.*)

EDMUNDS. Hold your hand, sir — hold your hand, or I'll fell you to the ground. Maddox, leave this place directly. Take the opposite path, and I'll follow you. (*Exit* MADDOX.) As for you, sir, who, by the way of vindicating yourself from the charge of cowardice, raise your gun against an unarmed man, tell your protector the Squire, from me, that he and his companions might content themselves with turning the heads of our farmers' daughters, and endeavouring to corrupt their hearts, without wantonly insulting the men they have most injured. Let this be a lesson to you, sir. Although you were armed, you would have had the worst of a scuffle, and you may not have the benefit of a third person's interference at so critical a moment another time. Remember this warning, sir, and benefit by it. [*Exit.*

FLAM (*aside*). If Norton does not take a dear revenge for this insult, I have lost my influence with him. Bully! coward! They shall rue it.

ROSE (*with her apron to her eyes*). Oh, Mr. Flam! I can't bear to think that you should have suffered all this on my account.

FLAM (*aside*). On her account!—a little vanity! (*To her*). Suffered! Why, my dear, it was the drollest and most humorous affair that ever happened. Here stand I, the Honourable Sparkins Flam, on this second day of September, one thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine, and positively and solemnly declare that all the coffee-houses, play-houses, faro-tables, brag-tables, assemblies, drums, and routs of a whole season put together could not furnish such a splendid piece of exquisite drollery. The idea is admirable. My affecting to quarrel with a ploughman, and submitting to be lectured by another caterpillar, whom I suffer to burst into a butterfly importance.

ROSE. Then you were not really quarrelling?

FLAM. Bless you, no! I was only acting.

ROSE. Lor! how well you do act, to be sure.

FLAM. Come, let us retire into the house, or, after this joke, we shall be the gaze of all the animated potatoes that are planted in this hole of a village. Why do you hesitate, Damask?

ROSE. Why, I have just been thinking that if you go to all the coffee-houses, and play-houses, and fairs, and brags, and keep playing drums, and routing people about, you'll forget me when you go back to London.

FLAM (*aside*). More than probable. (*To her*). Never fear; you will be generally known as Rose the Lovely, and I shall be universally denominated Flam the Constant.

Duet.—ROSE *and* SPARKINS FLAM.

FLAM. 'T is true I'm carressed by the witty,
The envy of all the fine beaux,
The pet of the court and the city,
But still I 'm the lover of Rose.

ROSE. Country sweethearts, oh, how I despise!
And oh, how delighted I am
To think that I shine in the eyes
Of the elegant, sweet Mr. Flam.

FLAM. Allow me. [*Offers to kiss her.*

ROSE. Pray don't be so bold, sir. [*Kisses her.*

FLAM. What sweets on that honied lip hang!

ROSE. Your presumption, I know, I should scold, sir,
But I really *can't* scold Mr. Flam.

BOTH. Then let us be happy together,
Content with the world as it goes,
An unchangeable couple for ever,
Mr. Flam and his beautiful Rose.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Farmer's Kitchen. A table and chairs.

Enter OLD BENSON *and* MARTIN.

BEN. Well, Stokes, now you have the opportunity you have desired, and we are alone; I am ready to listen to the information which you wished to communicate to my private ear.

MARTIN. Exactly—you said information, I think?

BEN. You said information, or I have forgotten.

MARTIN. Just so, exactly; I said information. I *did* say information; why should I deny it?

BEN. I see no necessity for your doing so, certainly. Pray go on.

MARTIN. Why, you see, my dear Mr. Benson, the fact is—won't you be seated? Pray sit down (*brings forward two chairs; they sit*). There, now—let me see—where was I?

BEN. You were going to begin, I think.

MARTIN. Oh,—ah!—so I was;—I hadn't begun, had I?

BEN. No, no! Pray begin again, if you had.

MARTIN. Well, then, what I have got to say is not so much information as a kind of advice, or suggestion, or hint, or something of that kind; and it relates to—eh?
[*Looking very mysterious.*

BEN. What?

MARTIN. Yes (*nodding*). Don't you think there 's something wrong there?

BEN. Where?

MARTIN. In that quarter.

BEN. In what quarter? Speak more plainly, sir.

MARTIN. You know what a friendly feeling I entertain to your family. You know what a very particular friend of mine you are.

You know how anxious I always am to prevent anything going wrong.

BEN. Well! (*abruptly*).

MARTIN. Yes, I see you're very sensible of it, but I'll take it for granted: you needn't bounce and fizz about in that way, because it makes one nervous. Don't you think, now, *don't* you think that ill-natured people may say (don't be angry, you know, because if I wasn't a very particular friend of the family I wouldn't mention the subject on any account) —don't you think that ill-natured people may say there's something wrong in the frequency of the Squire's visits here?

BEN. (*starting up furiously*). What?

MARTIN (*aside*). Here he goes again!

BEN. Who dares suspect my child?

MARTIN. Ah! to be sure, that's exactly what I say. Who dares? Damme, I should like to see 'em!

BEN. Is it you?

MARTIN. I? Bless you, no, not for the world! I? Come, that's a good one. I only say what other people say, you know; that's all.

BEN. And what are these tales that idle busy fools prate of with delight among themselves, caring not whose ears they reach, so long as they are kept from the old man, whose blindness—the blindness of a fond and doting father—is subject for their rude and brutal jeering? What are they?

MARTIN. Dear me, Mr. Benson, you keep me in a state of perpetual excitement.

BEN. Tell me, without equivocation, what do they say?

MARTIN. Why, they say they think it—not exactly wrong, perhaps: don't fly out, now; but among those remarkable coincidences which do occur sometimes, that whenever you go out of your house the Squire and his friend should come into it; that Miss Lucy and Miss Rose in the long walks they take every day should be met and walked home with by the same gentlemen; that long after you have gone to bed at night the Squire and Mr. Sparkins Flam should still be seen hovering about the lane and meadow; and that one of the lattice windows should be always open at that hour.

BEN. This is all?

MARTIN. Ye—yes—yes, that's all.

BEN. Nothing beside?

MARTIN. Eh?

BEN. Nothing beside?

MARTIN. Why, there *is* something else, but I know you'll begin to bounce about again if I tell it you.

BEN. No, no! let me hear it all.

MARTIN. Why, then, they do say that the Squire has been heard to boast that he had practised on Lucy's mind, that when he bid her she would leave her father and home, and follow him over the world.

BEN. They lie! Her breast is pure and innocent. Her soul is free from guilt, her mind from blemish. They lie! I'll not believe it. Are they mad? Do they think that I stand tamely by and look upon my child's disgrace? Heaven! do they know of what a father's heart is made?

MARTIN. My dear Mr. Benson, if you——

BEN. This coarse and brutal boast shall be disowned. [*Going*, MARTIN *stops him.*

MARTIN. My dear Mr. Benson, you know it may not have been made after all; my dear sir——

BEN. (*struggling*). Unhand me, Martin! Made or not made, it has gone abroad, fixing an infamous notoriety on me and mine. I'll hear its truth or falsehood from himself.

[*Breaks from him, and exit.*

MARTIN (*solus*). There'll be something decidedly wrong here presently. Hallo! here's another very particular friend in a fume.

Enter YOUNG BENSON, *hastily.*

MARTIN. Ah! my dear fellow, how——

YOUNG BEN. Where is Lucy?

MARTIN. I don't know, unless she has walked out with the Squire.

YOUNG BEN. The Squire!

MARTIN. To be sure; she very often walks out with the Squire. Very pleasant recreation walking out with the Squire—capital custom, ain't it?

YOUNG BEN. Where's my father?

MARTIN. Upon my word, I am unable to satisfy your curiosity in that particular either. All I know of him is that he whisked out of this room in a rather boisterous and turbulent manner, for an individual at his time of life, some few seconds before you whisked in. But what's the matter?—you seem excited. Nothing wrong, is there?

YOUNG BEN. (*aside*). This treatment of Edmunds, and Lucy's altered behaviour to him, confirm my worst fears. Where is Mr. Norton?

MARTIN (*calling off*). Ah! to be sure; where is Mr. Norton?

Enter SQUIRE.

SQUIRE. Mr. Norton is here. Who wishes to see him?

YOUNG BEN. I do.

MARTIN. I don't, old fellow; good bye! Mr. Norton, good evening. (*Aside*). There'll be something wrong here in a minute. [*Exit.*

YOUNG BEN. If you contemplate treachery here, Mr. Norton, look to yourself. My father is an old man; the chief prop of his declining years is his child—my sister. For your actions here, sir, you shall render a dear account to me.

SQUIRE. To *you*, peasant!

YOUNG BEN. To me, sir. One other scene like that enacted by your creature, at your command, to-night, may terminate more seriously to him. For your behaviour here, you are responsible to me.

SQUIRE. Indeed! Anything more, sir?

YOUNG BEN. Simply this:—After injuring the old man beyond reparation, and embittering the last moments of his life, you may possibly attempt to shield yourself under the paltry excuse that, as a gentleman, you cannot condescend to take the consequences from my hand. You *shall* take them from me, sir, if I strike you to the earth first. [*Exit.*

SQUIRE. Fiery and valorous, indeed! As the suspicions of the family are aroused, no time is to be lost; the girl must be carried off to-night, if possible. With Flam's assistance and management she may be speedily removed from within the reach of these rustic sparks. In my cooler moments, the reflection of the misery I may inflict upon the old man makes my conduct appear base and dishonourable, even to myself. Pshaw! hundreds have done the same thing before me, who have been lauded and blazoned forth as men of honour. Honour in such cases—an idle tale!—a byword! Honour! There is much to be gleaned from old tales, and the legend of the child and the old man speaks but too truly.

Song.—SQUIRE NORTON.

The child and the old man sat alone
In the quiet peaceful shade
Of the old green boughs, that had richly grown
In the deep thick forest glade.
It was a soft and pleasant sound,
That rustling of the oak;
And the gentle breeze played lightly round
As thus the fair boy spoke:—

"Dear father, what can honour be,
Of which I hear men rave?
Field, cell and cloister, land and sea,
The tempest and the grave,
It lives in all, 't is sought in each,
'T is never heard or seen;
Now tell me, father, I beseech,
What can this honour mean?"

"It is a name—a name, my child;
It lived in other days,
When men were rude, their passions wild,
Their sport thick battle frays;
When, in armour bright, the warrior bold
Knelt to his lady's eyes.
Beneath the abbey pavement old
That warrior's dust now lies.

"The iron hearts of that old day
Have mouldered in the grave,
And chivalry has passed away
With knights so true and brave.
The honour, which to them was life,
Throbs in no bosom now;
It only gilds the gambler's strife,
Or decks the worthless vow."

Enter LUCY.

SQUIRE. Lucy, dear Lucy!

LUCY. Let me entreat you not to stay here, sir. You will be exposed to nothing but insult and attack. Edmunds and my brother have both returned, irritated at something that has passed with my cousin Rose. For my sake—for my sake, Mr. Norton, spare me the pain of witnessing what will ensue if they find you here! You little know what I have borne already.

SQUIRE. For your sake, Lucy, I would do much; but why should I leave you to encounter the passion and ill-will from which you would have me fly?

LUCY. Oh, I can bear it, sir. I deserve it but too well.

SQUIRE. Deserve it! You do yourself an injustice, Lucy. No, rather let me remove you from a house where you will suffer nothing but persecution, and confer upon you a title which the proudest lady in the land might wear. Here—here, on my knees (*he bends on his knee and seizes her hand*).

Enter FLAM.

"SQUIRE (*rising*). Flam here!

FLAM (*aside*). Upon my word!—I thought we had been getting on pretty well in the open air, but they 're beating us hollow here, under cover.

SQUIRE. Lucy, but one word, and I understand your decision.

LUCY. I—I cannot subdue the feelings of uneasiness and distrust which the great difference between your honour's rank and mine awakens in my mind.

SQUIRE. Difference! Hundreds of such cases happen every day.

LUCY. Indeed!

SQUIRE. Oh, 't is a matter of general notoriety, isn't it, Flam?

FLAM. No doubt of it. (*Aside.*) Don't exactly know yet what they are talking about, though.

SQUIRE. A relation of my own, a man of exalted rank, courted a girl far his inferior in station, but only beneath him in that respect. In all others she was on a footing of equality with himself, if not far above him.

LUCY. And were they married?

FLAM (*aside*). Rather an important circumstance in the case. I *do* remember that.

SQUIRE. They were—after a time, when the resentment of his friends, occasioned by his forming such an attachment, had subsided, and he was able to acknowledge her, without involving the ruin of both.

LUCY. They were married privately at first, then?

FLAM (*aside*). I must put in a word here. Oh, yes, it was all comfortably arranged to everybody's satisfaction; wasn't it, Norton?

SQUIRE. Certainly. And a happy couple they were; weren't they, Flam?

FLAM. Happiest of the happy. As happy as (*aside*) a separation could make them.

SQUIRE. Hundreds of great people have formed similar attachments; haven't they, Flam?

FLAM. Undoubtedly. There was the Right Honourable Augustus Frederick Charles Thomson Camhardo, and the German Baron Hyfenstyfenlooberhausen, and they were both married—(*aside*)—to somebody else, first. Not to mention Damask and I, who are models of constancy. By the bye, I have lost sight of her, and I am interrupting you. (*Aside to* SQUIRE *as he goes out.*) I came to tell you that she is ripe for an elopement if you urge her strongly. Edmunds has been reproaching her to my knowledge. She 'll consent while her passion lasts. [*Exit.*"

SQUIRE. Lucy, I wait your answer. One word from you, and a few hours will place you far beyond the reach of those who would fetter your choice and control your inclinations. You hesitate. Come, decide. The squire's lady, or the wife of Edmunds?

Duet.—LUCY *and* SQUIRE NORTON.

SQUIRE. In rich and lofty station shine,
Before his jealous eyes:
In golden splendour, lady mine,
This peasant youth despise.

LUCY (*apart: the* SQUIRE *regarding her attentively*).
Oh! It would be revenge indeed,
With scorn his glance to meet.
I, I, his humble pleading heed!
I 'd spurn him from my feet.

SQUIRE. With love and rage her bosom's torn,
And rash the choice will be;

LUCY. With love and rage my bosom's torn,
And rash the choice will be.

SQUIRE. From hence she quickly must be borne,
Her home, her home, she'll flee.

LUCY. Oh! long shall I have cause to mourn
My home, my home, for thee!

Enter OLD BENSON.

BENSON. What do I see? The Squire and Lucy.

SQUIRE. Listen. A chaise and four fleet horses, under the direction of a trusty friend of mine, will be in waiting on the high road, at the corner of the elm-tree avenue to-night, at ten o'clock. They shall bear you whither we can be safe, and in secret, by the first light of morning.

LUCY. His cruel harshness; it would be revenge, indeed. But my father—my poor old father!

SQUIRE. Your father is prejudiced in Edmunds' favour; and so long as he thinks there is any chance of your being his, he will oppose your holding communication with me. Situated as you are now, you only stand in the way of his wealth and advancement. Once fly with me, and in four and twenty hours you will be his pride, his boast, his support.

OLD BENSON *coming forward.*

BENSON. It is a lie, a base lie! (LUCY *shrieks and throws herself at his feet*). My pride! my boast! She would be my disgrace, my shame: an outcast from her father's roof, and from the world. Support!—support *me* with the gold coined in her infamy and guilt! Heaven help me! Have I cherished her for this?

LUCY (*clinging to him*). Father! dear, dear father!

SQUIRE. Hear me speak, Benson. Be calm.

BENSON. Calm! Do you know that from infancy I have almost worshipped her, fancying that I saw in her young mind the virtues of a mother to whom the anguish of this one hour would have been worse than death? Calm! Do you know that I have a heart and soul within me? or do you believe that because I am of lower station, I am a being of a different order to yourself, and that Nature has denied me thought and feeling? Calm! Man, do you know that I am this girl's father?

SQUIRE. Benson, if you will not hear me, at least do not by hastily exposing this matter deprive me of the inclination of making you some reparation.

BENSON. Reparation! You need be thankful, sir, for the grasp she has upon my arm. Money! If she were dying for want, and the smallest coin from you could restore her to life and health, sooner than she should take it from your hand, I would cast her from a sick bed to perish on the roadside.

SQUIRE. Benson, a word.

BENSON. Do not, I caution you; do not talk to me, sir. I am an old man, but I do not know what passion may make me do.

SQUIRE. These are high words, Benson. A farmer!

BENSON. Yes, sir, a farmer: one of the men on whom you, and such as you, depend for the money they squander in profligacy and idleness. A farmer, sir! I care not for your long pedigree of ancestors—my forefathers made them all. Here, neighbours, friends, [ROSE, MADDOX, STOKES, Villagers, *etc.*, *crowd on the stage.*
hear this, hear this. Your landlord, a high-born gentleman, entering the houses of your humble farmers and tempting their daughters to destruction.

Enter YOUNG BENSON *and* GEORGE EDMUNDS.

YOUNG BEN. What 's that I hear?
[*Rushing towards the* SQUIRE. STOKES *interposes.*

MARTIN. Hallo, hallo! Take hold of the other one, John.
[MADDOX *and he remove them to opposite sides of the stage.*
Hold him tight, John, hold him tight. Stand still, there 's a good fellow. Keep back, Squire. Knew there 'd be something wrong: ready to come in at the nick of time—capital custom.

FLAM *enters and stands next the* SQUIRE.

SQUIRE. Exposed! baited! Benson, are

you mad? Within the last few hours my friend here has been attacked and insulted on the very land you hold, by a person in your employ and young Edmunds there. I, too, have been threatened and insulted in the presence of my tenantry and workmen. Take care you do not drive me to extremities. Remember, the lease of this farm for seventy years, which your father took of mine, expires to-morrow, and that I have the power to refuse its renewal. Again I ask you, are you mad?

BENSON. Quit my house, villain!

SQUIRE. Villain! Quit *my* house, then. This farm is mine, and you and yours shall depart from under its roof before the sun has set to-morrow.

[BENSON *sinks into a chair in centre, and covers his face with his hands. Sestette and Chorus.*

LUCY, ROSE, EDMUNDS, SQUIRE NORTON, FLAM, YOUNG BENSON, *and* Chorus.

YOUNG BEN. Turn him from the farm!
From his home will you cast
The old man who has tilled it for years?
Ev'ry tree, ev'ry flower is linked with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears.
Turn *him* from the farm! O'er its grassy hillside
A gay boy he once loved to range;
His boyhood has fled, and its dear friends are dead,
But these meadows have never known change.

EDMUNDS. Oppressor, hear me.

LUCY. On my knees I implore.

SQUIRE. I command it, and you will obey.

ROSE. Rise, dear Lucy, rise. You shall not kneel before
The tyrant who drives us away.

SQUIRE. Your sorrows are useless, your prayers are in vain;
I command it, and you will begone.
I'll hear no more.

EDMUNDS. No, they shall not beg again
Of a man whom I view with deep scorn.

FLAM. Do not yield.

YOUNG BENSON, SQUIRE, LUCY, ROSE. Leave the farm!

EDMUNDS. Your power I despise.

SQUIRE. And your threats, boy, I disregard too.

FLAM. Do not yield.

YOUNG BENSON, SQUIRE, LUCY, ROSE. Leave the farm!

ROSE. If he leaves it, he dies.

EDMUNDS. This base act, proud man, you shall rue.

YOUNG BEN. Turn him from the farm!
From his home will you cast
The old man who has tilled it for years?
Ev'ry tree, ev'ry flower is linked with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears.

SQUIRE. Yes, yes; leave the farm! From his home I will cast
The old man who has tilled it for years,
Though each tree and flower is linked with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears.

Chorus.

He has turned from his farm, from his home he has cast
The old man who has tilled it for years;
Though each tree and flower is linked with the past,
And a friend of his childhood appears.

End of the First Act.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Hall. A breakfast-table with urn and tea-service. A Livery Servant *arranging it.* FLAM, *in a morning gown and slippers, reclining on the sofa.*

FLAM. Is the Squire out of bed yet?

SERVANT. Yes, sir, he will be down directly.

FLAM. Any letters from London?

SERVANT. One, for your honour, that the man brought over from the market town this morning.

FLAM. Give it me, blockhead! (Servant *gives it, and exit.*) Never like the look of a great official-folded letter, with a large seal, "it's always an unpleasant one. Talk of discovering a man's character from his hand-writing!—I'll back myself against any odds to form a very close guess at the contents of a letter from the form into which it is folded. This, now, I should say is a decidedly hostile fold. Let us see. 'King's Bench Walk, September 1st, 1729. Sir, I am instructed by my client, Mr. Edward Montague, to apply to you'—(the old story—for the immediate payment, I suppose—what's this?)—'to apply to you for the instant restitution of the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds his son lost to you at play, and to acquaint you that, unless it is immediately forwarded to my office, as above, the circumstances of the transaction will be made known, and the unfair and fraudulent means by which you deprived the young man of his money publicly advertised.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, John Ellis.' The devil! who would believe, now, that such a trifling circumstance as the mere insinuation of a small piece of gold into the corner of two dice would influence a man's destiny? What's to be done? If by some dexterous stroke I could manage to curry favour with Norton, and procure some handsome present in return for services rendered—for 'work and labour done and performed,' as my obedient servant, John Ellis, would say—I might keep my head above water yet. I have it! He shall have a joyful surprise. I'll carry this girl off for him, and he shall know nothing of the enter-

prise until it is completed, or, at least, till she is fairly off. I have been well rewarded for similar services before, and may securely calculate on his gratitude in the present instance. He is here. [*Puts up the letter.*"

Enter SQUIRE NORTON.

SQUIRE (*seating himself at table*). Has any application for permission to remain at the farm been made from Benson this morning, Flam?

FLAM. None.

SQUIRE. I am sorry for it; although I admire the old man's independent spirit, I am very sorry for it. Wrong as I know I have been, I would rather that the first concession came from him.

FLAM. Concession!

SQUIRE. The more I reflect on the occurrences of yesterday, Flam, the more I regret that under the influence of momentary passion and excitement I should have used so uncalled-for a threat against my father's oldest tenant. It is an act of baseness to which I look back with abhorrence.

FLAM (*aside*). What weathercock morality is this?

SQUIRE. It was unnecessary violence.

FLAM. Unnecessary! Oh, certainly; no doubt you could have attained your object without it, and can still. There is no occasion to punish the old man.

SQUIRE. Nor will I. He shall not leave the farm, if I myself implore and beg him to remain.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Two young women to speak with your honour.

Enter LUCY *and* ROSE.

SQUIRE. Lucy!

FLAM (*aside*). She must be carried off to-night, or she certainly will save me the trouble, and I shall lose the money.

LUCY. Your honour may well be surprised to see me here after the events of yesterday. It has cost me no trifling struggle to take this step, but I hope my better feelings have at length prevailed, and conquered my pride and weakness. I wish to speak to your honour with nobody by.

FLAM (*aside*). Nobody by! I rather suspect I 'm not particularly wanted here. (*To them.*) Pray allow us to retire for a few moments. Rose, my dear.

ROSE. Well!

FLAM. Come along.

LUCY. Rose will remain here. I brought her for that purpose.

FLAM. Bless me! that 's very odd. As you please, of course; but I really think you 'll find her very much in the way. (*Aside.*) Acting propriety! So much the better for my purpoce; a little coyness will enhance the value of the prize. [*Exit.*

LUCY. Mr. Norton, I come here to throw myself upon your honourable feelings as a man and as a gentleman. Oh, sir! now that my eyes are opened to the misery into which I have plunged myself by my own ingratitude and treachery, do not—do not add to it the reflection that I have driven my father in his old age from the house where he was born, and in which he hoped to have died.

SQUIRE. Be calm, Lucy: your father shall continue to hold the farm; the lease shall be renewed.

LUCY. I have more to say to your honour still, and what I have to add may even induce your honour to retract the promise you have just now made me.

SQUIRE. Lucy, what can you mean?

LUCY. Oh, sir! call me coquette, faithless, treacherous, deceitful—what you will. I deserve it all; but, believe me, I speak the truth when I make the humiliating avowal. A weak despicable vanity induced me to listen with a ready ear to your honour's addresses, and to cast away the best and noblest heart that ever woman won.

SQUIRE. Lucy, 't was but last night you told me that your love for Edmunds had vanished into air; that you hated and despised him.

LUCY. I know it, sir, too well. He laid bare my own guilt, and showed me the ruin which impended over me. He spoke the truth. Your honour more than confirmed him.

SQUIRE (*after a pause*). Even the avowal you have just made, unexpected as it is, shall not disturb my resolution. Your father shall not leave his farm.

Quartette.—LUCY, ROSE, SQUIRE NORTON, *and afterwards*, YOUNG BENSON.

SQUIRE. Hear me when I swear that the farm is your own
Through all changes Fortune may make;
The base charge of falsehood I never have known:
This promise I never will break.

ROSE *and* LUCY. Hear him when he swears that the farm is our own
Through all changes Fortune may make;
The base charge of falsehood he never has known:
This promise he never will break.

Enter YOUNG BENSON.

YOUNG B. My sister here! Lucy, begone, I command!

SQUIRE. To your home I restore you again.

YOUNG B. No boon I 'll accept from that treacherous hand,
As the price of my sister's fair fame.

SQUIRE. To your home!

YOUNG B. (*to* LUCY). Hence away!

LUCY. Brother, dear, I obey.

SQUIRE. I restore.

YOUNG B. Hence away!

YOUNG B., ROSE, *and* LUCY. Let us leave.

LUCY. He swears it, dear brother.

SQUIRE. I swear it.

YOUNG B. Away!
SQUIRE. I swear it.
YOUNG B. You swear to deceive.
SQUIRE. Hear me, when I swear that the farm is your own
Through all changes Fortune may make.
LUCY *and* ROSE. Hear him when he swears that the farm is our own
Through all changes Fortune may make.
YOUNG BEN. Hear him swear, hear him swear, that the farm is our own
Through all changes Fortune may make.
SQUIRE. The base charge of falsehood I never have known:
This promise I never will break.
LUCY *and* ROSE. The base charge of falsehood he never has known:
This promise he never will break.
YOUNG BEN. The base charge of falsehood he often has known:
This promise he surely will break.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

Re-enter FLAM *in a waking dress.*

FLAM. The coast is clear at last. What on earth the conversation can have been at which Rose *was* wanted, and I was not, I confess my inability to comprehend; but away with speculation, and now to business. [*Rings.*

Enter Servant.

Pen and ink.

SERVANT. Yes, sir. [*Exit* Servant.

FLAM. Nearly all the tenantry will be assembled here at the ball to night; and if the father of this rustic Dulcinea is reinstated in his farm, he and his people will, no doubt, be among the number. It will be easy enough to entice the girl into the garden through the window opening on the lawn; a chaise can be waiting in the quiet lane at the side, and some trusty fellow can slip a hasty note into Norton's hand informing him of the flight, and naming the place at which he can join us. (*Re-enter* Servant *with pen, ink, taper, and two sheets of note-paper; he places them on the table and exit.*) I may as well reply to my friend Mr. John Ellis's obliging favour now, too, by promising that the money shall be forwarded in the course of three days' post. (*Takes the letter from his pocket and lays it on the table.*) Lie you there. First, for Norton's note. "Dear Norton,—Knowing your wishes—seized the girl—no blame attach to you. Join us as soon as people have dispersed in search of her in all directions but the right one—fifteen miles off." (*Folds it ready for an envelope and lays it by the side of the other letter.*) Now, for John Ellis. Why, what does that rascal mean by bringing but two sheets of paper? No matter, that affair will keep cool till to-morrow, when I have less business on my hands and more money in my pockets, I hope. (*Crumples the letter he has just written hastily up, thrusts it into his pocket, and folds the wrong one in the envelope.*) *As he is sealing it,*

Enter MARTIN, *very cautiously.*

MARTIN (*peeping*). There he is, hatching some mysterious and diabolical plot. If I can only get to the bottom of these dreadful designs, I shall immortalize myself. What a lucky dog I am to be such a successful gleaner of news, and such a confidential person into the bargain, as to be the first to hear that he wanted some trustworthy person. All comes of talking to everybody I meet, and drawing out everything they hear. Capital custom! He don't see me. Hem! (*Coughs very loud, and when* FLAM *looks round, nods familiarly.*) How are you again?

FLAM. How am I again? Who the devil are you?—and what do you want here?

MARTIN. Hush!

FLAM. Eh?

MARTIN. Hush! I'm the man.

FLAM. *The* man?

MARTIN. Yes, the man that you asked the hostler at the George to recommend you; the trustworthy man that knows all the by-roads well, and can keep a secret; the man that you wanted to lend you a hand in a job that——

FLAM. Hush! hush!

MARTIN. Oh! you're beginning to hush now, are you?

FLAM. Haven't I seen your face before?

MARTIN. To be sure you have. You recollect admiring my manners at Benson's yesterday. You must remember Mr. Martin Stokes. You *can't* have forgotten him—not possible!

FLAM (*aside*). A friend of Benson's—a dangerous *rencontre*. Another moment, and our conversation might have taken a dangerous turn. (*To him.*) So you are Stokes, eh? Benson's friend Stokes?

MARTIN. To be sure. Ha! ha! I knew you couldn't have forgotten me. Pleasant Stokes they call me—clever Stokes sometimes—but that's flattery.

FLAM. No, surely.

MARTIN. Yes, 'pon my life, it is. Can't bear flattery—don't like it at all.

FLAM. Well, Mr. Stokes——

MARTIN (*aside*). Now for the secret.

FLAM. I am very sorry you have had the trouble of coming up here, Mr. Stokes, because I have changed my plan, and shall not require your valuable services.

[*Goes up to the table.*

MARTIN (*aside*). Something wrong here—try him again. You're sure you don't want me?

FLAM. Quite.

MARTIN. That's unlucky, because, as I've quarrelled with Benson——

FLAM. Quarrelled with Benson?

MARTIN. What! didn't you know that?

FLAM. Never heard of it. Now I think of it, Mr. Stokes, I *shall* want your assistance. Pray sit down, Mr. Stokes.

MARTIN. With pleasure. (*They sit.*) I say, I *thought* you wanted me.

FLAM. Ah, you 're a sharp fellow.

MARTIN. You don't mean that?

FLAM. I do, indeed.

MARTIN (*aside*). You would if you knew all.

FLAM. Conceited hound!

MARTIN (*aside*). Poor devil!

FLAM. Mr. Stokes, I needn't impress upon a gentleman of your intelligence the necessity of secresy in this matter.

MARTIN. Of course not. See all, say nothing. Capital custom—(*aside*)—not mine, though. Go on.

FLAM. You wouldn't mind playing Benson a trick, just a harmless trick.

"MARTIN. Certainly not. Go on.

FLAM. I 'll trust you.

MARTIN. So you may. Go on."

FLAM. A chaise and four will be waiting to-night at ten o'clock precisely at the little gate that opens from the garden into the lane.

"MARTIN. No! Will it, though? Go on."

FLAM. "Don't interrupt me, Stokes." Into that chaise you must assist me in forcing, as quickly as possible, and without a noise——

"MARTIN. Yes. Go on.

FLAM. Whom do you think?

MARTIN. Don't know."

FLAM. Can't you guess whom?

MARTIN. No.

FLAM. Try.

MARTIN. Eh? what? Miss——

FLAM. Hush, hush! You understand me, I see. Not another word; not another syllable.

MARTIN. But do you really mean to run away with——

FLAM (*stopping his mouth*). You understand me; that 's quite sufficient.

MARTIN (*aside*). He 's going to run away with Rose. Why, if I hadn't found this out, John Maddox, one of my most particular friends, would have gone stark, staring, raving mad with grief. (*To him.*) But what will become of Miss Lucy when she has lost Rose?

FLAM. No matter. We cannot take them both without the certainty of an immediate discovery. "Meet me at the corner of the avenue before the ball commences, and I will communicate any further instructions I may have to give you. Meanwhile" take this—(*gives him money*)—as an earnest of what you shall receive when the girl is secured. Remember, silence and secresy.

MARTIN. Silence and secresy (*exit* FLAM), confidence and two guineas. I am perfectly bewildered with this tremendous secret. What shall I do? Where shall I go? To my particular friend, old Benson, or young Benson, or George Edmunds? or—no; I 'll go and paralyse my particular friend John Maddox. Not a moment is to be lost. I am all in a fluster. Run away with Rose! I suppose he 'll run away with Lucy next. *I* shouldn't wonder. Run away with Rose! I never did. [*Exit hastily.* ——

SCENE II.

An open spot in the Village.

Enter SQUIRE NORTON.

SQUIRE. My mind is made up. This girl has opened her whole heart to me; and it would be worse than villany to pursue her further. I will seek out Benson and Edmunds, and endeavour to repair the mischief my folly has occasioned. I have sought happiness in the dissipation of crowded cities, in vain. A country life offers health and cheerfulness; and a country life shall henceforth be mine, in all seasons.

Song.—SQUIRE NORTON.

There's a charm in Spring, when ev'rything
  Is bursting from the ground;
When pleasant show'rs bring forth the flow'rs,
  And all is life around.

In Summer day, the fragrant hay
  Most sweetly scents the breeze;
And all is still, save murm'ring rill,
  Or sound of humming bees.

Old Autumn come, with trusty gun
  In quest of birds we roam:
Unerring aim, we mark the game,
  And proudly bear it home.

A Winter's night has its delight,
  Well warmed to bed we go;
A Winter's day, we're blithe and gay,
  Snipe-shooting in the snow.

A country life, without the strife
  And noisy din of town,
Is all I need; I take no heed
  Of splendour or renown.

And when I die, oh, let me lie
  Where trees above me wave,
Let wild plants bloom around my tomb,
  My quiet country grave! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The rick-yard, same as Act I., Scene I.

EDMUNDS *and* MADDOX *meeting.*

JOHN. Ah, George! Why, this is kind to come down to the old farm to-day, and take one peep at us before we leave it for ever. I suppose it 's fancy now, George, but, to my thinking, I never saw the hedges look so fresh, the fields so rich, or the old house so pretty and comfortable as they do this morning. It 's fancy, that, George; ain't it?

EDMUNDS. It 's a place you may well be fond of and attached to, for it 's the prettiest spot in all the country round.

JOHN. Ah, you always enter into my feelings. And, speaking of that, I want to ask your advice about Rose. I meant to come up to you to-day on purpose. Do you think she is fond of me, George?

EDMUNDS (*smiling*). What do *you* think? She has not shown any desperate warmth of affection of late, has she?

JOHN. No, no; she certainly has not; but she used to once. And the girl has got a good heart, after all; and she came crying to me this morning in the little paddock, and, somehow or other, my heart melted towards her; and—and there's something very pleasant about her manner; isn't there, George?

EDMUNDS. No doubt of it, as other people besides ourselves would appear to think.

JOHN. You mean Mr. Flam? (EDMUNDS *nods assent.*) Ah, it's a bad business altogether; but still, there are some excuses to be made for a young country girl who has never seen a town gentleman before, and can't be expected to know as well as you and I, George, what the real worth of one is. However that may be, Rose came into the little paddock this morning, as I was standing there looking at the young colts and thinking of all our misfortunes, and first of all she walked by me, and then she stopped at a little distance, and then she walked back and stopped again, and I heard her sobbing as if her heart would burst; and then she came a little nearer, and at last she laid her hand upon my arm and looked up in my face; and the tears started into my eyes, George, and I couldn't bear it any longer, for I thought of the many pleasant days we had seen together, and it hurt me to think that she should ever have done anything to make her afraid of me, or me unkind to her.

EDMUNDS. You're a good fellow, John, an excellent fellow. Take her. I believe her to have an excellent disposition, though it is a little disguised by girlish levity sometimes. You may safely take her. And if she had far less good feeling than she actually possesses, she could never abuse your kind and affectionate nature.

JOHN. Is that your advice? Give me your hand, George (*they shake hands*). I will take her. You shall dance at our wedding, and I don't quite despair yet of dancing at yours at the same time.

EDMUNDS. At mine! Where is the old man? I came here to offer him the little cottage in the village which belongs to me. There is no tenant in it now: it has a pretty garden of which I know he is fond, and it may serve his turn till he has had time to look about him.

JOHN. He is somewhere about the farm; walk with me across the yard, and perhaps we may meet him. This way. [*Exeunt.*

Enter YOUNG BENSON.

YOUNG BENSON. The worst portion of the poor old man's hard trial is past. I have lingered with him in every field on the land, and wandered through every room in the old house. I can neither blame his grief, nor console him in his affliction, for the farm has been the happy scene of my birth and boyhood; and I feel, in looking on it for the last time, as if I were leaving the dearest friends of my youth for ever.

Song.—YOUNG BENSON.

My fair home is no longer mine;
From its rooftree I'm driven away.
Alas! who will tend the old vine
Which I planted in infancy's day?
The garden, the beautiful flowers,
The oak with its branches on high,
Dear friends of my happiest hours,
Among thee I long hoped to die.
The briar, the moss, and the bramble
Along the green paths will run wild,—
The paths where I once used to ramble,
An innocent light-hearted child.

At the conclusion of the song enter to the symphony OLD BENSON, *with* LUCY *and* ROSE.

YOUNG BENSON (*advancing to meet him*). Come, father, come!

OLD BENSON. I am ready, boy. We have but to walk a few steps, and the pang of leaving is over. Come, Rose, bring on that unhappy girl; come!

As they are going, enter the SQUIRE, *who meets them.*

SQUIRE. I am in time.

BENSON (*to* YOUNG BENSON, *who is advancing*). Harry, stand back. Mr. Norton, if by this visit you intend to mock the misery you have inflicted here, it is a heartless insult that might have been spared.

SQUIRE. You do me an injustice, Benson. I come here—not to insult your grief, but to entreat, implore you to remain. The lease of this farm shall be renewed; I beseech you to remain here.

BENSON. It is not the quitting even the home of my infancy, which most men love, that bows my spirit down to-day. Here, in this old house, for near two hundred years, my ancestors have lived and died, and left their names behind them free from spot or blemish. I am the first to cross its threshold with the brand of infamy upon me. Would to God I had been borne from its porch a senseless corpse many weary years ago, so that I had been spared this hard calamity! You have moved an old man's weakness, but not with revenge, sir. You implore me to remain here. I spurn your offer. *Here!* A father yielding to the destroyer of his child's good name and honour! Say no more, sir. Let me pass.

Enter behind STOKES *and* EDMUNDS.

SQUIRE. Benson, you are guilty of the foulest injustice—not to me, but to your daughter. After her fearless confession to me this morning of her love for Edmunds and her abhorrence of my professions, I honour her too much to injure her or you.

LUCY. Dear father, it is true, indeed. The noble behaviour of his honour to me this morning I can never forget or be too grateful for.

BENSON. Thank God! thank God! I can look upon her once again. My child, my own child! (*He embraces her with great emotion.*)

I have done your honour wrong. I hope you 'll forgive me. [*They shake hands.*

MARTIN (*running forward*). So have I! so have I! I have done his honour wrong, and I hope he 'll forgive me too. You don't leave the farm then? Hurrah! (*A man carrying a pail, some harness, etc., crosses the stage*) Hallo! young fellow! go back, go back! Don't take another thing away; and bring back all you have carried off; they are going to stop in the farm. Hallo! you fellows! (*calling off*) leave the barn alone, and put everything in its place. They are going to stop in the farm. [*Exit bawling.*

BENSON (*seeing* EDMUNDS). What! George here, and turning away from his old friend, too, without a look of congratulation or a shake of the hand, just at the time when, of all others, he had the best right to expect it. For shame, George, for shame!

EDMUNDS. My errand here is rendered useless. By accident, and not intentionally, I partly overheard just now the nature of the avowal made by your daughter to Mr. Norton this morning.

BENSON. You believe it, George? You cannot doubt its truth.

EDMUNDS. I *do* believe it. But I have been hurt, slighted, set aside for another. My honest love has been despised; my affection has been remembered only to be tried almost beyond endurance. Lucy, all this from *you* I freely forgive. Be what you have been once, and what you may so well become again. Be the high-souled woman, not the light and thoughtless trifler that disgraces the name. Let me see you this, and you are mine again. Let me see you what you have been of late, and I can never be yours.

BENSON. Lead her in, Rose. Come, dear, come!

The BENSONS *and* ROSE *lead her slowly away.*

EDMUNDS. Mr. Norton, if this altered conduct be sincere, it deserves a much better return than my poor thanks can ever be to you. If it be feigned, to serve some purposes of your own, the consequences will be upon your head.

SQUIRE. And I shall be prepared to meet them.

Duet.—SQUIRE *and* EDMUNDS.

SQUIRE. Listen, though I do not fear you,
Listen to me, ere we part.
EDMUNDS. List to *you!* Yes, I will hear you.
SQUIRE. Yours alone is Lucy's heart,
I swear it by that Heav'n above me.
EDMUNDS. What! can I believe my ears?
Could I hope that she still loves me?
SQUIRE. Banish all these doubts and fears,
If a love were e'er worth gaining,
If love were ever fond and true,
No disguise or passion feigning,
Such is her young love for you.
SQUIRE. Listen, though I do not fear you,
Listen to me ere we part.
EDMUNDS. List to you! Yes, I will hear you,
Mine alone is her young heart.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV.

The Avenue leading to the Hall by moonlight. The house in the distance gaily illuminated.

Enter FLAM *and* MARTIN.

FLAM. You have got the letter I gave you for the Squire?

MARTIN. All right. Here it is.

FLAM. The moment you see me leave the room, slip it into the Squire's hand; you can easily do so without being recognized in the confusion of the dance, and then follow me. You perfectly understand your instructions?

MARTIN. Oh, yes; I understand them well enough.

FLAM. There 's nothing more, then, that you want to know?

MARTIN. No, nothing—oh, yes, there is; I want to know whether—whether——

FLAM. Well, go on.

MARTIN. Whether you could conveniently manage to let me have another couple of guineas before you go away in the chaise. Payment beforehand—capital custom. And if you don't, perhaps I may not get them at all, you know. (*Aside.*) Seeing that I don't intend to go at all, I think it 's very likely.

FLAM. You 're a remarkably pleasant fellow, Stokes, in general conversation—very; but when you descend into particularities, you become excessively prosy. On some points, money matters, for instance, you have a very grasping imagination, and seem disposed to dilate upon them at too great length. You must cure yourself of this habit—you must, indeed. Good bye, Stokes; you shall have the two guineas doubled when the journey is completed. Remember—ten o'clock. [*Exit.*

MARTIN. I shan't forget ten o'clock, depend upon it. Now to burst upon my particular friend, Mr. John Maddox, with the awful disclosure. He must pass this way on his road to the Hall. Here they come; don't see him, though.

Groups of male and female Villagers *in cloaks, etc., cross the stage on their way to the Hall.*

MARTIN. How are you, Tom? How do, Will?

VILLAGERS. How do, Mas'r Stokes?

MARTIN (*shaking hands with them*). How do, Susan? Mind, Carry, you 're my first partner. Always kiss your first partner—capital custom (*kisses her*). Good bye! see you up at the Hall.

VILLAGERS. Ay, ay, Mas'r Stokes.

[*Exeunt* Villagers.

MARTIN. Not among them (*more* Villagers *cross*)—nor them. Here he comes; Rose with

him, too. Innocent little victim, little thinking of the atrocious designs that are going on against her!

Enter MADDOX *and* ROSE *arm-in-arm.*

JOHN. Ha, ha, ha! that was a good 'un, wasn't it? Ah, Martin! I wish I'd seen you a minute ago: I made such a joke! How you would have laughed!

MARTIN (*mysteriously beckoning* MADDOX *away from* ROSE, *and whispering*). I want to speak to you.

JOHN (*whispering*). What about?

ROSE. Lor! don't stand whispering there, John. If you have anything to say, Mr. Stokes, say it before me.

JOHN (*taking her arm*). Ah! say it before her! Don't mind her, Martin: she's to be my wife, you know, and we're to be on the mutual-confidence principle. Ain't we, Rose?

ROSE. To be sure. Why don't you speak, Mr. Stokes? I suppose it's the old story—something wrong.

MARTIN. Something wrong? I rather think there is; and you little know what it is, or you wouldn't look so merry. What I have got to say—don't be frightened, Miss Rose—relates to—don't alarm yourself, Master Maddox.

JOHN. I ain't alarming myself; you're alarming me. Go on!

ROSE. Go on, can't you?

MARTIN. Relates to Mr. Flam.

JOHN (*dropping* ROSE's *arm*). Mr. Flam?

MARTIN. Hush! and Miss Rose.

ROSE. Me? me and Mr. Flam?

MARTIN. Mr. Flam intends at ten o'clock this very night—don't be frightened, miss—by force, in secret, and in a chaise-and-four, too—to carry off against her will and elope with Miss Rose.

ROSE. Me! Oh! [*Screams, and falls into the arms of* MADDOX.

JOHN. Rub her hands, Martin, she's going off in a fit.

MARTIN. Never mind; she'd better go off in a fit than a chaise.

ROSE (*recovering*). Oh, John, don't let me go!

JOHN. Let you go!—not if I set the whole Hall on fire.

ROSE. Hold me fast, John.

JOHN. I'll hold you fast enough, depend upon it.

ROSE. Come on the other side of me, Mr. Stokes; take my arm; hold me tight, Mr. Stokes.

MARTIN. Don't be frightened, I'll take care of you. [*Takes her arm.*

ROSE. Oh, Mr. Stokes!

MARTIN. Oh, indeed! Nothing wrong, eh?

ROSE. Oh, Mr. Stokes! pray forgive my having doubted that there was——Oh, what a dreadful thing! What is to be done with me?

MARTIN. Upon my word I don't know. I think we had better shut her up in some place underground; hadn't we, John? Or stay. Suppose we borrow the keys of the family vault, and lock her up there for an hour or two.

JOHN. Capital.

ROSE. Lor! surely you may find out some more agreeable place than that, John?

MARTIN. I have it. I'm to carry her off.

BOTH. You?

MARTIN. Me—don't be afraid of me—all my management: you dance with her all the evening, and I'll keep close to you. If anybody tries to get her away, you knock him down, and I'll help you.

JOHN. That's the plan. Come along.

ROSE. Oh, I am so frightened! Hold me fast, Mr. Stokes. Don't let me go, John!

[*Exeunt talking.*

Enter LUCY.

LUCY Light-hearted revellers, how I envy them! How painful is my situation—obliged with a sad heart to attend a festivity from which the only person I would care to meet will, I know, be absent. "But I will not complain. He shall see that I can become worthy of him once again. I have lingered here so long, watching the soft shades of evening as they closed around me, that I cannot bear the thought of exchanging this beautiful scene for the noise and glare of a crowded room."

Song.—LUCY.

How beautiful at eventide
To see the twilight shadows pale
Steal o'er the landscape, far and wide,
O'er stream and meadow, mound and dale.
How soft is Nature's calm repose
When ev'ning skies their cool dews weep:
The gentlest wind more gently blows,
As if to soothe her in her sleep!
The gay morn breaks,
Mists roll away;
All Nature awakes
To glorious day.
In my breast alone
Dark shadows remain;
The peace it has known
It can never regain.

SCENE THE LAST.

A spacious Ball-room, brilliantly illuminated. A window at the end, through which is seen a moonlit landscape. A large concourse of country people discovered. The SQUIRE, FLAM, *the* BENSONS, LUCY, ROSE, MARTIN, *and* MADDOX.

SQUIRE. Welcome, friends; welcome all! Come, choose your partners, and begin the dance.

FLAM (*to* LUCY). Your hand for the dance?

LUCY. Pray excuse me, sir; I am not well. My head is oppressed and giddy. I would rather sit by the window which looks into the

garden, and feel the cool evening air. (*She goes up; he follows her.*)

JOHN (*aside*). Stand by me, Martin. He's gone to order the chaise, perhaps.

ROSE. Oh! pray don't let me be taken away, Mr. Stokes.

MARTIN. Don't be frightened—don't be frightened. Mr. Flam is gone. I'll give the Squire the note in a minute.

SQUIRE. Now, begin the dance.

A COUNTRY DANCE.

[MARTIN *and* MADDOX, *in their endeavours to keep close to* ROSE, *occasion great confusion. As the* SQUIRE *is looking at some particular couple in the dance,* MARTIN *steals behind him, thrusts the letter in his hands, and resumes his place. The* SQUIRE *looks round as if to discover the person who has delivered it; but, being unsuccessful, puts it up, and retires among the crowd of dancers. Suddenly a violent scream is heard, and the dance abruptly ceases. Great confusion.* MARTIN *and* MADDOX *hold* ROSE *firmly.*]

SQUIRE. What has happened? whence did that scream proceed?

SEVERAL VOICES. From the garden! from the garden!

EDMUNDS (*without*). Raise him, and bring him here. Lucy—dear Lucy!

BENSON. Lucy! My child!

[*Runs up the stage, and exit into the garden.*

MARTIN. *His* child! Damme! they can't get this one, so they're going to run away with the other. Here's some mistake here. Let me go, Rose. Come along, John. Make way there—make way!

[*As they run towards the window,* EDMUNDS *appears at it, without a hat and his dress disordered, with* LUCY *in his arms. He delivers her to her Father and* ROSE.]

ROSE. Lucy, dear Lucy, look up!

BEN. Is she hurt, George? Is the poor child injured?

EDMUNDS. No, it is nothing but terror; she will be better instantly. See! she is recovering now.

[LUCY *gradually recovers, as* FLAM, *his clothes torn and face disfigured, is led in by* MADDOX *and* MARTIN.]

BEN. Mr. Norton, this is an act of perjury and baseness, of which another instant would have witnessed the completion.

SQUIRE (*to* FLAM). Rascal! this is your deed.

FLAM (*aside to* NORTON). That's right, Norton; keep it up.

SQUIRE. Do not address me with your odious familiarity, scoundrel!

FLAM. You don't really mean to give me up?

SQUIRE. I renounce you from this instant.

FLAM. You do? Then take the consequences.

SQUIRE. Benson—Edmunds—friends—I declare to you, most solemnly, that I had neither hand nor part in this disgraceful outrage. It has been perpetrated, without my knowledge, wholly by that scoundrel.

FLAM. 'T is false! It was done with his consent. He has in his pocket at this moment a letter from me, acquainting him of my intentions.

ALL. A letter!

SQUIRE. A letter *was* put into my hands five minutes since, but it acquainted me, not with this fellow's intentions, but with his real dishonourable and disgraceful character, to which I had hitherto been a stranger. (*To* FLAM.) Do you know that handwriting, sir?

[*Showing him the letter.*

FLAM. Ellis's letter! (*Searching his pockets and producing the other.*) I must—ass that I was!—I did—enclose the wrong one.

SQUIRE. You will quit my house this instant; its roof shall not shelter you another night. Take that with you, sir, and begone.

[*Throwing him a purse.*

FLAM (*taking it up*). Ah! I suppose you think this munificent, now—eh? I could have made twice as much of you in London, Norton; I could, indeed, to say nothing of my exhibiting myself for a whole week to these clods of earth, which would have been cheap, dirt-cheap, at double the money. Bye-bye, Norton! Farewell, grubs! [*Exit.*

SQUIRE. Edmunds, you have rescued your future wife from brutal violence; you will not leave her exposed to similar attempts in future?

EDMUNDS. Even if I would, I feel, now that I have preserved her, that I could not.

SQUIRE. Then take her, and with her the old farm, which from henceforth is your own. *You* will not turn the old man out, I suppose?

EDMUNDS (*shaking* BENSON *by the hand*). I don't think we are very likely to quarrel on that score, and most gratefully do we acknowledge your honour's kindness. Maddox!

JOHN. Hallo!

EDMUNDS. I shall not want that cottage and garden we were speaking of this morning, now. Let me imitate a good example, and bestow it on *your* wife, as *her* marriage portion.

ROSE. Oh, delightful! Say certainly, John, —can't you?

JOHN. Thank'ee, George, thank'ee! I say, Martin, I have arrived at the dignity of a cottage and a piece of ground at last.

MARTIN. Yes, you may henceforth consider yourself on a level with me.

SQUIRE. Resume the dance.

MARTIN. I beg your pardon. One word. (*Whispers the* SQUIRE.)

SQUIRE. I hope not. Recollect you have been mistaken before to-day. You had better inquire.

MARTIN. I will. (*To the audience.*) My

very particular friend, if he will allow me to call him so——

SQUIRE. Oh, certainly.

MARTIN. My very particular friend, Mr. Norton, wishes me to ask any other particular friends here, whether there's anything wrong. We are delighted to hear your approving opinion in the old way. You *can't* do better. It 's a capital custom.

Dance and Finale.—Chorus.

Join the dance, with step as light
As ev'ry heart should be to-night;
Music, shake the lofty dome
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Join the dance, and banish care,
All are young and gay and fair;
Even age has youthful grown
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Join the dance, bright faces beam,
Sweet lips smile, and dark eyes gleam;
All these charms have hither come
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Join the dance, with step as light
As ev'ry heart should be to-night;
Music, shake the lofty dome
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Quintette.

LUCY, ROSE, EDMUNDS, *the* SQUIRE, YOUNG BENSON.

No light bound
Of stag or timid hare,
O'er the ground
Where startled herds repair,
Do we prize
So high, or hold so dear,
As the eyes
That light our pleasures here.

No cool breeze
That gently plays by night
O'er calm seas
Whose waters glisten bright,
No soft moan
That sighs across the lea,
Harvest Home,
Is half so sweet as thee.

Chorus.

Hail to the merry Autumn days, when yellow corn-fields shine
Far brighter than the costly cup that holds the monarch's wine;
Hail to the merry harvest-time, the gayest of the year,
The time of rich and bounteous crops, rejoicing, and good cheer.
Hail! hail! hail!

THE STRANGE GENTLEMAN.

A Comic Burletta, in Two Acts.

First performed at the St. James's Theatre, on Thursday, September 29, 1836.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

A Room at the St. James's Arms; door in centre, with a bolt on it. A table with cover, and two chairs, R.H.

Enter MRS. NOAKES, C. *door.*

MRS. NOAKES. Bless us, what a coachful! Four inside—twelve out; and the guard blowing the key-bugle in the fore-boot, for fear the informers should see that they have got one over the number. Post-chaise and a gig besides. We shall be filled to the very attics. Now, look alive there—bustle about. Now, John.

Enter First Waiter, *running*, C. *door.*

FIRST W. (*coming down*, R.H.) Single lady, inside the stage, wants a private room, ma'am.

MRS. NOAKES (R.H.) Much luggage?

FIRST W. Four trunks, two bonnet-boxes, six brown paper parcels, and a basket.

MRS. NOAKES. Give her a private room directly. No. 1, on the first floor.

FIRST W. Yes, ma'am.

[*Exit* First Waiter, *running*, C. *door.*

Enter Second Waiter, *running*, C. *door.*

MRS. NOAKES. Now, Tom.

SECOND W. (*coming down*, R.H.) Two young ladies and one young gentleman, in a post-chaise, want a private sitting-room d'rectly, ma'am.

MRS. NOAKES. Brother and sisters, Tom?

SECOND W. Ladies are something alike, ma'am, gentleman like neither of 'em.

MRS. NOAKES. Husband and wife and wife's sister, perhaps. Eh, Tom?

SECOND W. Can't be husband and wife, ma'am, because I saw the gentleman kiss one of the ladies.

MRS. NOAKES. Kissing one of the ladies! Put them in the small sitting-room behind the bar, Tom, that I may have an eye on them through the little window, and see that nothing improper goes forward.

SECOND W. Yes, ma'am. [*Going.*

MRS. NOAKES. And, Tom!

[*Crossing to* L.H.

SECOND W. (*coming down* R.H.) Yes, ma'am?

MRS. NOAKES. Tell cook to put together all the bones and pieces that were left on the plates at the great dinner yesterday, and make some nice soup to feed the stage-coach passengers with.

SECOND W. Very well, ma'am.

[*Exit* Second Waiter, C. *door.*

Enter Third Waiter, *running*, C. *door.*

MRS. NOAKES. Now, Will,

THIRD W. (*coming down* L.H.) A strange gentleman in a gig, ma'am, wants a private sitting-room.

MRS. NOAKES. Much luggage, Will?

THIRD W. One portmanteau and a great-coat.

MRS. NOAKES. Oh, nonsense! Tell him to go into the commercial room.

THIRD W. I told him so, ma'am; but the strange gentleman says he *will* have a private apartment, and that it 's as much as his life is worth to sit in a public room.

MRS. NOAKES. As much as his life is worth?

THIRD W. Yes, ma'am. Gentleman says he doesn't care if it 's a dark closet; but a private room of some kind he must and will have.

MRS. NOAKES. Very odd. Did you ever see him before, Will?

THIRD W. No, ma'am; he 's quite a stranger here. He 's a wonderful man to talk, ma'am—keeps on like a steam-engine. Here he is, ma'am.

STRANGE GENTLEMAN (*without*). Now, don't tell me, because that 's all gammon and nonsense, and gammoned I never was, and never will be by any waiter that ever drew the breath of life or a cork. And just have the goodness to leave my portmanteau alone, because I can carry it very well myself, and show me a private room without further delay; for a private room I must and will have. —Damme! do you think I 'm going to be murdered?

Enter the three Waiters, C. *door. They form down* L.H., *the* STRANGE GENTLEMAN *following, carrying his portmanteau and greatcoat.*

There — this room will do capitally well. Quite the thing—just the fit. How are you, ma'am? I suppose you are the landlady of this place? Just order these very attentive young fellows out, will you? and I 'll order dinner.

MRS. NOAKES (*to* Waiters). You may leave the room.

STRANGE G. Hear that?—you may leave the room. Make yourselves scarce—evaporate —disappear, come. [*Exit* Waiters, C. *door.* That's right. And now, madam, while we 're talking over this important matter of dinner, I 'll just secure us effectually against further intrusion. [*Bolts the door.*

MRS. NOAKES. Lor, sir! bolting the door, and *me* in the room!

STRANGE G. Don't be afraid—I won't hurt

you. I have no designs against you, my dear ma'am; but *I must be in private.*

[*Sits on the portmanteau*, R.H.

MRS. NOAKES. Well, sir, I have no objection to break through our rules for once; but it is not our way when we 're full to give private rooms to solitary gentlemen who come in a gig, and bring only one portmanteau. You 're quite a stranger *here*, sir. If I 'm not mistaken, it 's your first appearance at this house.

STRANGE G. You 're right, ma'am. It *is* my first, my very first; but not my last, I can tell you.

MRS. NOAKES. No?

STRANGE G. No. (*looking round him*). I like the look of this place. Snug and comfortable—neat and lively. You 'll very often find me at the St. James's Arms, I can tell you, ma'am.

MRS. Noakes (*aside*). A civil gentleman. Are you a stranger in this town, sir?

STRANGE G. Stranger! bless you, no. I have been here for many years past, in the season.

MRS. NOAKES. Indeed?

STRANGE G. Oh, yes. Put up at the Royal Hotel regularly, for a long time; but I was obliged to leave it at last.

MRS. NOAKES. I have heard a good many complaints of it.

STRANGE G. Oh, terrible! Such a noisy house.

MRS. NOAKES. Ah!

STRANGE G. Shocking! Din, din, din—drum, drum, drum, all night,—nothing but noise, glare, and nonsense. I bore it a long time for old acquaintance' sake; but what do you think they did at last, ma'am?

MRS. NOAKES. I can't guess.

STRANGE G. Turned the fine old assembly-room into a stable, and took to keeping horses. I tried that too, but I found I couldn't stand it; so I came away, ma'am, and—and—here I am. [*Rises.*

MRS. NOAKES. And I 'll be bound to say, sir, that you will have no cause to complain of the exchange.

STRANGE G. I 'm sure not, ma'am; I know it—I feel it already.

MRS. NOAKES. About dinner, sir; what would you like to take?

STRANGE G. Let me see: will you be good enough to suggest something, ma'am?

MRS. NOAKES. Why, a broiled fowl and mushrooms is a very nice dish.

STRANGE G. You are right, ma'am; a broiled fowl and mushrooms form a very delightful and harmless amusement, either for one or two persons. Broiled fowl and mushrooms let it be, ma'am.

MRS. NOAKES. In about an hour, I suppose, sir?

STRANGE G. For the second time, ma'am, you have anticipated my feelings.

MRS. NOAKES. You 'll wan't a bed to-night, I suppose, sir? perhaps you 'd like to see it. Step this way, sir, and—— [*going* L.H.

STRANGE G. No, no; never mind. (*Aside.*) This is a plot to get me out of the room. She 's bribed by somebody who wants to identify me. I must be careful; I am exposed to nothing but artifice and stratagem. Never mind, ma'am, never mind.

MRS. NOAKES. If you 'll give me your portmanteau, sir, the Boots will carry it into the next room for you.

STRANGE G. (*aside*). Here 's diabolical ingenuity; she thinks it 's got the name upon it. (*To her.*) I 'm very much obliged to the Boots for his disinterested attention, ma'am, but with your kind permission this portmanteau will remain just exactly where it is; consequently, ma'am (*with great warmth*), if the aforesaid Boots wishes to succeed in removing this portmanteau, he must previously remove *me*, ma'am, *me;* and it will take a *pair* of very stout Boots to do that, ma'am, I promise you.

MRS. NOAKES. Dear me, sir! you needn't fear for your portmanteau in this house; I daresay nobody wants it.

STRANGE G. I hope not, ma'am, because in that case nobody will be disappointed. (*Aside.*) How she fixes her old eyes on me!

MRS. NOAKES (*aside*). I never saw such an extraordinary person in all my life. What can he be? (*Looks at him very hard*).

[*Exit* MRS. NOAKES, C. *door.*

STRANGE G. She 's gone at last! Now let me commune with my own dreadful thoughts, and reflect on the best means of escaping from my horrible position. (*Takes a letter from his pocket.*) Here's an illegal death warrant—a pressing invitation to be slaughtered—a polite request just to step out and be killed—thrust into my hand by some disguised assassin, in a dirty black calico jacket, the very instant I got out of the gig at the door. I know the hand. There 's a ferocious recklessness in the cross to this "t," and a baleful malignity in the dot of that "i," which warns me that it comes from my desperate rival. (*Opens it and reads.*) "Mr. Horatio Tinkles"—that 's him—"presents his compliments to his enemy"—that 's me—"and requests the pleasure of his company to-morrow morning under the clump of trees on Corpse Common,"—Corpse Common!—"to which any of the townspeople will direct him, and where he hopes to have the satisfaction of giving him his gruel." Giving him his gruel! Ironical cutthroat! "His punctuality will be esteemed a personal favour, as it will save Mr. Tinkles the trouble and inconvenience of calling with a horsewhip in his pocket. Mr. Tinkles has ordered breakfast at the Royal for *one*. It is paid for. The individual who returns alive can eat it. Pistols. Half-past five precisely." Blood-thirsty miscreant! *The* individual who

returns alive! I have seen him hit the painted man at the shooting gallery regularly every time in his centre shirt-plait, except when he varied the entertainments by lodging the ball playfully in his left eye. Breakfast! I shall want nothing beyond gruel. What's to be done? Escape! I can't escape. Concealment's of no use; he knows I am here. He has dodged me all the way from London, and will dodge me all the way to the residence of Miss Emily Brown, whom my respected but swine-headed parents have picked out for my future wife. A pretty figure I should cut before the old people, whom I have never beheld more than once in my life, and Miss Emily Brown, whom I have never seen at all, if I went down there pursued by this Salamander, who, I suppose, is her accepted lover! What is to be done? I can't go back again: father would be furious. What *can* be done? Nothing! (*Sinks into a chair.*) I must undergo this fiery ordeal, and submit to be packed up and carried back to my weeping parents like an unfortunate buck, with a flat piece of lead in my head, and a brief epitaph on my breast, "Killed on Wednesday morning." No, I won't (*starting up and walking about*). I won't submit to it. I 'll accept the challenge, but first I 'll write an anonymous letter to the local authorities, giving them information of this intended duel, and desiring them to place me under immediate restraint. That's feasible; on further consideration, it's capital. My character will be saved. I shall be bound over—he 'll be bound over. I shall resume my journey—reach the house—marry the girl—pocket the fortune, and laugh at him. No time to be lost; it shall be done forthwith. (*Goes to table and writes.*) There; the challenge accepted, with a bold defiance that 'll look very brave when it comes to be printed. Now for the other. (*Writes.*) "To the Mayor,—Sir,—A Strange Gentleman at the St. James's Arms, whose name is unknown to the writer of this communication, is bent upon committing a rash and sanguinary act at an early hour to-morrow morning. As you value human life, secure the amiable youth without delay. Think, I implore you, sir, think what would be the feelings of those to whom he is nearest and dearest if any mischance befall the interesting young man. Do not neglect this solemn warning; the number of his room is seventeen." There (*folding it up*). Now, if I can find any one who will deliver it secretly——

TOM SPARKS, *with a pair of boots in his hand, peeps in at the* C.D.

TOM. Are these here yourn?

STRANGE G. No.

TOM. Oh! [*Going back.*

STRANGE G. Hallo! stop—are you the Boots?

TOM (*still at the door*). I 'm the head o' that branch o' the establishment. There's another man under me, as brushes the dirt off, and puts the blacking on. The fancy work is my department—I do the polishing, nothing else.

STRANGE G. You are the Upper Boots, then?

TOM. Yes, I 'm the reg'lar; t' other one's only the deputy. Top Boots and Half-Boots, I calls us.

STRANGE G. You 're a sharp fellow.

TOM. Ah! I'd better cut, then. [*Going.*

STRANGE G. Don't hurry, Boots—don't hurry; I want you.

[*Rises and comes forward* R.H.

TOM (*coming forward* L.H.) Well?

STRANGE G. Can—can you be secret, Boots?

TOM. That depends entirely on accompanying circumstances. See the point?

STRANGE G. I think I comprehend your meaning, Boots. You insinuate that you could be secret (*putting his hand in his pocket*) if you had five shillings, for instance. Isn't that it, Boots?

TOM. That 's the line o' argument I should take up; but that ain't exactly my meaning.

STRANGE G. No?

TOM. No. A secret 's a thing as is always a-rising to one's lips. It requires an astonishing weight to keep one on 'em down.

STRANGE G. Ah!

TOM. Yes; I don't think I could keep one snug—reg'lar snug, you know——

STRANGE G. Yes; regularly snug, of course.

TOM.—If it had a less weight atop on it than ten shillins.

STRANGE G. You don't think three half-crowns would do it?

TOM. It might, I won't say it wouldn't, but I couldn't warrant it.

STRANGE G. You could the other?

TOM. Yes.

STRANGE G. Then there it is. (*Gives him four half-crowns.*) You see these letters?

TOM. Yes; I can manage that without my spectacles.

STRANGE G. Well, that 's to be left at the Royal Hotel. This—*this* is an anonymous one, and I want it to be delivered at the mayor's house without his knowing from whom it came or seeing who delivered it.

TOM (*taking the letters*). I say, you 're a rum 'un, you are.

STRANGE G. Think so? Ha, ha! so are you.

TOM. Ay, but you 're a rummer than me.

STRANGE G. No, no; that 's your modesty.

TOM. No, it ain't. I say, how well you did them last haystacks. How do you contrive that ere now, if it 's a fair question? Is it done with a pipe, or do you use them lucifer boxes?

STRANGE G. Pipe—lucifer boxes—haystacks! Why, what do you mean?

TOM (*looking cautiously round*). I know your name, old 'un.

STRANGE G. You know my name! (*Aside.*) Now, how the devil has he got hold of that, I wonder?

TOM. Yes, I know it. It begins with a "S."

STRANGE G. Begins with an "S"!

TOM. And ends with a "G" (*winking*). We've all heard talk of *Swing* down here.

STRANGE G. Heard talk of Swing! Here's a situation. Damme, d'ye think I'm a walking carboy of vitriol, and burn everything I touch? Will you go upon the errand you're paid for?

TOM. Oh, I'm going—I'm going. It's nothing to me, you know; I don't care. I'll only just give these boots to the deputy, to take them to whoever they belong to, and then I'll pitch this here letter in at the mayor's office window in no time.

STRANGE G. Will you be off?

TOM. Oh! I'm going, I'm going; close, you knows, close! [*Exit* TOM, C. *door.*

STRANGE G. In five minutes more the letter will be delivered; in another half-hour, if the mayor does his duty, I shall be in custody, and secure from the vengeance of this infuriated monster. I wonder whether they'll take me away? Egad! I may as well be provided with a clean shirt and a nightcap, in case. Let's see: she said the next room was my bed-room, and, as I have accepted the challenge, I may venture so far now. (*Shouldering the portmanteau.*) What a capital notion it is! there'll be all the correspondence in large letters in the county paper, and my name figuring away in Roman capitals, with a long story, how I was such a desperate dragon, and so bent upon fighting, that it took four constables to carry me to the mayor, and one boy to carry my hat. It's a capital plan—must be done—the only way I have of escaping unpursued from this place, unless I could put myself in the general post and direct myself to a friend in town. And then it's a chance whether they'd take me in, being so much over weight.

[*Exit with portmanteau,* L.H. MRS. NOAKES, *peeping in* C. *door, then entering.*

MRS. NOAKES. This is the room, ladies; but the gentleman has stepped out somewhere. He won't be long, I daresay. Pray come in, miss.

Enter MARY *and* FANNY WILSON, C. *door.*

MARY (C.) This is the Strange Gentleman's apartment, is it?

MRS. NOAKES (R.) Yes, miss. Shall I see if I can find him, ladies, and tell him you are here?

MARY. No; we should prefer waiting till he returns, if you please.

MRS. NOAKES. Very well, ma'am. He'll be back directly, I daresay, for it's very near his dinner-time.

[*Exit* MRS. NOAKES, C. *door.*

MARY. Come, Fanny, dear, don't give way to these feelings of depression. Take pattern by me. I feel the absurdity of our situation acutely; but you see that I keep up, nevertheless.

FANNY. It is easy for you to do so. *Your* situation is neither so embarrassing nor so painful a one as mine.

MARY. Well, my dear, it may not be, certainly; but the circumstances which render it less so are, I own, somewhat incomprehensible to me. My harebrained, madcap swain, John Johnson, implores me to leave my guardian's house and accompany him on an expedition to Gretna Green. I, with immense reluctance, and after considerable pressing——

FANNY. Yield a very willing consent.

MARY. Well, we won't quarrel about terms; at all events, I *do* consent. He bears me off, and when we get exactly half-way, discovers that his money is all gone, and that we must stop at this inn until he can procure a remittance from London by post. I think, my dear, you'll own that *this* is rather an embarrassing position.

FANNY. Compare it with mine. Taking advantage of your flight, I send express to *my* admirer, Charles Tomkins, to say that I have accompanied you: first, because I should have been miserable if left behind with a peevish old man alone; secondly, because I thought it proper that your sister should accompany you——

MARY. And, thirdly, because you knew that he would immediately comply with this indirect assent to his entreaties of three months' duration, and follow you without delay on the same errand. Eh, my dear?

FANNY. It by no means follows that such was my intention, or that I knew he would pursue such a course. But supposing he *has* done so? Supposing this Strange Gentleman should be himself——

MARY. *Supposing!* Why, you know it is. You told him not to disclose his name on any account. And the Strange Gentleman is not a very common travelling name, I should imagine; besides the hasty note, in which he said he would join you here.

FANNY. Well, granted that it is he. In what a situation am I placed? You tell me, for the first time, that *my* violent intended must on no account be beheld by *your* violent intended just now, because of some old quarrel between them of long standing, which has never been adjusted to this day. What an appearance this will have! How am I to explain it, or relate your present situation? I should sink into the earth with shame and confusion.

MARY. Leave it to me. It arises from my heedlessness. I will take it all upon myself, and see him alone. But tell me, my dear—as you got up this love affair with so much secresy and expedition during the four months you spent at Aunt Martha's, I have never yet

seen Mr. Tomkins, you know—is he so very handsome?

FANNY. See him, and judge for yourself.

MARY. Well, I will; and you may retire till I have paved the way for your appearance. But just assist me first, dear, in making a little noise to attract his attention if he really be in the next room, or I may wait here all day.

Duet.

At end of which exit FANNY, C. *door.* MARY *retires up,* R.H.

Enter STRANGE GENTLEMAN, L.H.

STRANGE G. There, now; with a clean shirt in one pocket and a nightcap in the other, I 'm ready to be carried magnanimously to my dungeon in the cause of love.

MARY (*aside*). He says he 's ready to be carried magnanimously to a dungeon in the cause of love. I thought it was Mr. Tomkins. Hem! [*Coming down* L.H.

STRANGE G. (*seeing her*). Hallo! who 's this? Not a disguised peace officer in petticoats? Beg your pardon, ma'am (*advancing towards her*). What—did—you——

MARY. Oh, sir, I feel the delicacy of my situation.

STRANGE G. (*aside*). Feels the delicacy of her situation! Lord bless us! what 's the matter? Permit me to offer you a seat, ma'am, if you 're in a delicate situation.

[*He places chairs; they sit.*

MARY. You are very good, sir. You are surprised to see me here, sir.

STRANGE G. No, no; at least, not very. Rather, perhaps—rather. (*Aside.*) Never was more astonished in all my life.

MARY (*aside*). His politeness, and the extraordinary tale I have to tell him, overpowers me. I must summon up courage. Hem!

STRANGE G. Hem!

MARY. Sir!

STRANGE G. Ma'am!

MARY. You have arrived at this house in pursuit of a young lady, if I mistake not?

STRANGE G. You are quite right, ma'am. (*Aside.*) Mysterious female!

MARY. If you *are* the gentleman I 'm in search of, you wrote a hasty note a short time since, stating that you would be found here this afternoon.

STRANGE G. (*drawing back his chair*). I—I—wrote a note, ma'am.

MARY. You need keep nothing secret from me, sir. I know all.

STRANGE G. (*aside*). That villain, Boots, has betrayed me! Know all, ma'am?

MARY. Everything.

STRANGE G. (*aside*). It must be so. She 's a constable's wife.

MARY. You *are* the writer of that letter, sir? I think I am not mistaken.

STRANGE G. You are not, ma'am; I confess I did write it. What was I to do, ma'am? consider the situation in which I was placed.

MARY. In your situation, you had, it appears to me, only one course to pursue.

STRANGE G. You mean the course I adopted?

MARY. Undoubtedly.

STRANGE G. I am very happy to hear you say so, though, of course, I should like it to be kept a secret.

MARY. Oh, of course.

STRANGE G. (*drawing his chair close to her, and speaking very softly*). Will you allow me to ask you whether the constables are downstairs?

MARY (*surprised*). The constables!

STRANGE G. Because if I am to be apprehended, I should like to have it over. I am quite ready if it must be done.

MARY. No legal interference has been attempted. There is nothing to prevent your continuing your journey to-night.

STRANGE G. But will not the other party follow?

MARY (*looking down*). The other party, I am compelled to inform you, is detained here by—by want of funds.

STRANGE G. (*starting up*). Detained here by want of funds! Hurrah! hurrah! I have caged him at last. I'm revenged for all his blustering and bullying. This is a glorious triumph, ha, ha, ha! I have nailed him—nailed him to the spot!

MARY (*rising indignantly*). This exulting over a fallen foe, sir, is mean and pitiful. In my presence, too, it is an additional insult.

STRANGE G. Insult! I wouldn't insult you for the world, after the joyful intelligence you have brought me. I could hug you in my arms! One kiss, my little constable's deputy.

[*Seizing her.*

MARY (*struggling with him*). Help! help!

Enter JOHN JOHNSON, C. *door.*

JOHN. What the devil do I see?

[*Seizes* STRANGE GENTLEMAN *by the collar.*

MARY (L.H.) John and Mr. Tomkins met together! They'll kill each other. Here, help! help! [*Exit* MARY, *running*, C. *door.*

JOHN (*shaking him*). What do you mean by that, scoundrel?

STRANGE G. Come, none of your nonsense; there 's no harm done.

JOHN. No harm done! How dare you offer to salute that lady?

STRANGE G. What did you send her here for?

JOHN. *I* send her here!

STRANGE G. Yes, *you;* you gave her instructions, I suppose. (*Aside.*) Her husband, the constable, evidently.

JOHN. The lady, sir, is attached to me.

STRANGE G. Well, I know she is; and a very useful little person she must be, to be attached to anybody. It 's a pity she can't be legally sworn in.

JOHN. *Legally* sworn in! Sir, that is an insolent reflection upon the temporary em

barrassment which prevents our taking the marriage vow. How dare you to insinuate——

STRANGE G. Pooh! pooh! — don't talk about daring to insinuate. It doesn't become a man in your station of life——

JOHN. My station of life!

STRANGE G. But as you have managed this matter very quietly, and say you're in temporary embarrassment—here—here's five shillings. [*Offers it.*

JOHN. Five shillings! [*Raises his cane.*

STRANGE G. (*flourishing a chair*). Keep off, sir!

Enter MARY, TOM SPARKS, *and two* Waiters.

MARY. Separate them or there'll be murder.

[TOM *clasps* STRANGE GENTLEMAN *round the waist. The* Waiters *seize* JOHN JOHNSON.

TOM. Come, none o' that ere, Mr. S. We don't let private rooms for such games as these. If you want to try it on very partickler, we don't mind making a ring for you in the yard, but you mustn't do it here.

JOHN. Let me get at him. Let me go, waiters. Mary, don't hold me. I insist on your letting me go.

STRANGE G. Hold him fast. Call yourself a *peace* officer, you prize-fighter?

JOHN (*struggling*). Let me go, I say!

STRANGE G. Hold him fast! hold him fast!

[TOM *takes* STRANGE G. *off*, R.H. Waiters *take* JOHN *off*, L.H., MARY *following.*

SCENE II.

Another Room in the Inn.

Enter JULIA DOBBS *and* OVERTON, L.H.

JULIA. You seem surprised, Overton.

OVERTON. Surprised, Miss Dobbs! Well I may be when, after seeing nothing of you for three years and more, you come down here, without any previous notice, for the express purpose of running away—positively running away—with a young man. I am astonished, Miss Dobbs.

JULIA. You would have had better reason to be astonished if I had come down here with any notion of positively running away with an old one, Overton.

OVERTON. Old or young, it would matter little to me if you had not conceived the preposterous idea of entangling me—*me*, an attorney and mayor of the town—in so ridiculous a scheme. Miss Dobbs, I can't do it. I really cannot consent to mix myself up with such an affair.

JULIA. Very well, Overton; very well. You recollect that in the lifetime of that poor old dear Mr. Woolley, who——

OVERTON. Who would have married you if he hadn't died, and who, as it was, left you his property free from all incumbrances, the incumbrance of himself, as a husband, not being among the least——

JULIA. Well, you may recollect that in the poor old dear's lifetime sundry advances of money were made to you at my persuasion, which still remain unpaid. Oblige me by forwarding them to my agent in the course of the week, and I free you from any interference in this little matter.

[*Crosses to* L.H., *and is going.*

OVERTON. Stay, Miss Dobbs, stay. As you say, we *are* old acquaintances, and there certainly *were* some small sums of money which—which——

JULIA. Which certainly *are* still outstanding.

OVERTON. Just so, just so; and which, perhaps, you would be likely to forget if you had a husband. Eh, Miss Dobbs, eh?

JULIA. I have little doubt that I should. If I gained one through your assistance, indeed, I can safely say I should forget all about them.

OVERTON. My dear Miss Dobbs, we perfectly understand each other. Pray proceed.

JULIA. Well, dear Lord Peter——

OVERTON. That's the young man you're going to run away with, I presume?

JULIA. That's the young *nobleman* who's going to run away with me, Mr. Overton.

OVERTON. Yes, just so. I beg your pardon—pray go on.

JULIA. Dear Lord Peter is young and wild, and the fact is, his friends do not consider him very sagacious or strong-minded. To prevent their interference, our marriage is to be a secret one. In fact, he is now stopping at a friend's hunting seat in the neighbourhood; he is to join me here, and we are to be married at Gretna.

OVERTON. Just so. A matter, as it seems to me, which you can conclude without my interference.

JULIA. Wait an instant. To avoid suspicion, and prevent our being recognized and followed, I settled with him that you should give out in this house that he was a lunatic, and that I, his aunt, was going to convey him in a chaise to-night to a private asylum at Berwick. I have ordered the chaise at half-past one in the morning. You can see him, and make our final arrangements. It will avert all suspicion if I have no communication with him till we start. You can say to the people of the house that the sight of me makes him furious.

OVERTON. Where shall I find him? Is he here?

JULIA. You know best.

OVERTON. I?

JULIA. I desired him immediately on his arrival, to write you some mysterious nonsense acquainting you with the number of his room.

OVERTON (*producing a letter*). Dear me! he has arrived, Miss Dobbs.

JULIA. No!

OVERTON. Yes, see here—a most mysterious and extraordinary composition, which was thrown in at my office window this morn-

ing, and which I could make neither head nor tail of. Is that his handwriting?

[*Giving her the letter.*

JULIA (*taking letter*). I never saw it more than once, but I know he writes very large and straggling. (*Looks at letter.*) Ha! ha! ha! This is capital, isn't it?

OVERTON. Excellent! Ha! ha! ha!—So mysterious.

JULIA. Ha! ha! ha! So very good—"Rash act."

OVERTON. Yes. Ha! ha!

JULIA. "Interesting young man."

OVERTON. Yes. Very good.

JULIA. "Amiable youth."

OVERTON. Capital!

JULIA. "Solemn warning."

OVERTON. Yes. That 's best of all.

[*They both laugh.*

JULIA. Number seventeen, he says. See him at once, that 's a good creature.

[*Returning the letter.*

OVERTON (*taking letter*). I will.

[*He crosses to* L.H. *and rings a bell. Enter* Waiter, L.H.

Who is there in number seventeen, waiter?

WAITER. Number seventeen, sir?—Oh! the Strange Gentleman, sir.

OVERTON. Show me the room.

[*Exit* Waiter, L.H.

(*Looking at* JULIA, *and pointing to the letter*) "The Strange Gentleman. "Ha, ha, ha! Very good—very good indeed. Excellent notion! (*They both laugh.*) [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

Same as the first. A small table, with wine, dessert, and lights on it, R.H. *of* C. *door; two chairs.*

STRANGE GENTLEMAN *discovered seated at table.*

STRANGE G. "The other party is detained here by want of funds." Ha, ha, ha! I can finish my wine at my leisure, order my gig when I please, and drive on to Brown's in perfect security. I 'll drink the other party's good health, and long may he be detained here (*fills a glass*). Ha, ha, ha! The other party; and long may he—(*A knock at* C. *door*). Hallo! I hope *this* isn't the other party. Talk of the—(*a knock at* C. *door*). Well—(*setting down his glass*)—this is the most extraordinary private room that was ever invented. I am continually disturbed by unaccountable knocking. (*A gentle tap at* C. *door.*) There's another; that was a gentle rap—a persuasive tap—like a friend's forefinger on one's coat-sleeve. It *can't* be Tinkles with the gruel. Come in.

OVERTON *peeping in at* C. *door.*

OVERTON. Are you alone, my lord?

STRANGE G. (*amazed*). Eh!

OVERTON. Are you alone, my lord?

STRANGE G. My lord!

OVERTON (*stepping in and closing the door*). You are right, sir, we cannot be too cautious, for we do not know who may be within hearing. You are very right, sir.

STRANGE G. (*rising from table, and coming forward,* R.H.) It strikes me, sir, that you are very wrong.

OVERTON. Very good, very good! I like this caution; it shows me you are wide awake.

STRANGE G. Wide awake! Damme, I begin to think I am fast asleep, and have been for the last two hours.

OVERTON (*whispering*). I—am—the mayor.

STRANGE G. (*in the same tone*). Oh!

OVERTON. This is your letter? (*Shows it;* STRANGE G. *nods assent solemnly.*) It will be necessary for you to leave here to-night, at half-past one o'clock, in a post-chaise and four; and the higher you bribe the postboys to drive at their utmost speed, the better.

STRANGE G. You don't say so?

OVERTON. I do, indeed. You are not safe from pursuit here.

STRANGE G. Bless my soul! can such dreadful things happen in a civilized community, Mr. Mayor?

OVERTON. It certainly does at first sight appear rather a hard case that people cannot marry whom they please, without being hunted down in this way.

STRANGE G. To be sure. To be hunted down, and killed as if one was game, you know.

OVERTON. Certainly; and you ain't game, you know.

STRANGE G. Of course not. But can't you prevent it? Can't you save me by the interposition of your power?

OVERTON. My power can do nothing in such a case.

STRANGE G. Can't it, though?

OVERTON. Nothing whatever.

STRANGE G. I never heard of such dreadful revenge—never! Mr. Mayor, I am a victim; I am the unhappy victim of parental obstinacy.

OVERTON. Oh, no! don't say that. You may escape yet.

STRANGE G. (*grasping his hand*). Do you think I may? Do you think I may, Mr. Mayor?

OVERTON. Certainly—certainly! I have little doubt of it, if you manage properly.

STRANGE G. I thought I *was* managing properly. I understood the other party was detained here by want of funds.

OVERTON. Want of funds! There 's no want of funds in that quarter, I can tell you.

STRANGE G. Ain't there, though?

OVERTON. Bless you, no. Three thousand a year! But who told you there was a want of funds?

STRANGE G. Why, she did.

OVERTON. *She!* You *have* seen her, then? She told me you had not.

STRANGE G. Nonsense! don't believe her. She was in this very room half an hour ago.

OVERTON. Then I must have misunderstood her, and you must have misunderstood her too. But to return to business. Don't you think it would keep up appearances if I had you put under restraint?

STRANGE G. I think it would. I am very much obliged to you. (*Aside.*) This regard for my character in an utter stranger, and in a mayor too, is quite affecting.

OVERTON. I 'll send somebody up to mount guard over you.

STRANGE G. Thank'ee, my dear friend, thank'ee.

OVERTON. And if you make a little resistance when we take you upstairs to your bed-room, or away in the chaise, it will be keeping up the character, you know.

STRANGE G. To be sure. So it will. I 'll do it.

OVERTON. Very well, then. I shall see your lordship again by-and-bye. For the present, my lord, good evening. [*Going.*

STRANGE G. Lord! Lordship! Mr. Mayor!

OVERTON. Eh? Oh! I see. (*Comes forward.*) Practising the lunatic, my lord. Ah, very good—very vacant look indeed. Admirable, my lord, admirable! I say, my lord—(*pointing to the letter*)—"*Amiable youth*"—"Interesting young man"—"Strange Gentleman." Eh? Ha, ha, ha! Knowing trick indeed, my lord, very!

[*Exit* OVERTON, C. *door.*

STRANGE G. That mayor is either in the very last stage of mystified intoxication, or in the most hopeless state of incurable insanity. I have no doubt of it. A little touched here (*tapping his forehead*). Never mind, he is sufficently sane to understand my business, at all events. (*Goes to table and takes a glass.*) Poor fellow! I 'll drink his health, and speedy recovery. (*A knock at* C. *door.*) It is a most extraordinary thing, now, that every time I propose a toast to myself some confounded fellow raps at that door, as if he were receiving it with the utmost enthusiasm. Private room! I might as well be sitting behind the little shutter of a twopenny post office where all the letters put in were to be post-paid. (*A knock at* C. *door.*) Perhaps it 's the guard. I shall feel a great deal safer if it is. Come in.

[*He has brought a chair forward, and sits* L.H.

Enter TOM SPARKS, C. *door, very slowly, with an enormous stick. He closes the door, and, after looking at the* STRANGE GENTLEMAN *very steadily, brings a chair down* L.H., *and sits opposite him.*

STRANGE G. Are you sent by the mayor of this place to mount guard over me?

TOM. Yes, yes. It 's all right.

STRANGE G. (*aside*). It 's all right. I 'm safe. (*To* TOM, *with affected indignation.*) Now mind, I have been insulted by receiving this challenge, and I want to fight the man who gave it me. I protest against being kept here. I denounce this treatment as an outrage.

TOM. Ay, ay; anything you please. Poor creature! Don't put yourself in a passion; it 'll only make you worse. [*Whistles.*

STRANGE G. This is most extraordinary behaviour. I don't understand it. What d'ye mean by behaving in this manner? [*Rising.*

TOM (*aside*). He 's a-getting wiolent. I must frighten him with a steady look. I say, young feller, do you see this here eye?

[*Staring at him, and pointing at his own eye.*

STRANGE G. (*aside*). Do I see his eye? What can he mean by glaring upon me with that large round optic? Ha! a terrible light flashes upon me. He thought I was "Swing" this morning. It was an insane delusion; that eye is an insane eye. He 's a madman!

TOM. Madman! Damme, I think he is a madman, with a wengeance.

STRANGE G. He acknowledges it. He is sensible of his misfortune. Go away—leave the room instantly, and tell them to send somebody else. Go away!

TOM. Oh, you unhappy lunatic!

STRANGE G. What a dreadful situation! I shall be attacked—strangled, smothered, and mangled by a madman. Where 's the bell?

TOM (*advancing and brandishing his stick*). Leave that 'ere bell alone—leave that 'ere bell alone—and come here.

STRANGE G. Certainly, Mr. Boots, certainly. He 's going to strangle me. (*Going towards table.*) Let me pour you out a glass of wine, Mr. Boots—pray do. (*Aside.*) If he said "Yes," I 'd throw the decanter at his temple.

TOM. None o' your nonsense—sit down there. (*Forces him into a chair* L.H.) I 'll sit here. (*Opposite him,* R.H.) Look me full in the face, and I won't hurt you. Move hand, foot, or eye, and you 'll never want to move either of 'em again.

STRANGE G. I 'm paralysed with terror.

TOM. Ha! (*Raising his stick in a threatening attitude.*)

STRANGE G. I 'm dumb, Mr. Boots—dumb, sir.

[*They sit gazing intently on each other, Tom with the stick raised, as the Act Drop slowly descends.*

ACT II.—SCENE I.

The same as SCENE III., ACT I.

TOM SPARKS *discovered in the same attitude, watching the* STRANGE GENTLEMAN, *who has fallen asleep with his head over the back of the chair.*

TOM. He 's asleep; poor unhappy wretch! How very mad he looks, with his mouth wide open and his eyes shut! (STRANGE G. *snores.*) Ah! there 's a wacant snore; no meaning in it at all. I could ha' told he was out of his

senses from the very tone of it (*he snores again*). That 's a wery insane snore. I should say he was molan-cholly mad from the sound of it. *Enter, through* C. *door*, OVERTON, MRS. NOAKES, *a* Chambermaid, *and two* Waiters; MRS. N. *with a warming-pan, the* Maid *with a light.* STRANGE G. *starts up, greatly exhausted.*

TOM (*starting up in* C.). Hallo!—Hallo! Keep quiet, young fellow, keep quiet!

STRANGE G. (L.H.) Out of the way, you savage maniac. Mr. Mayor (*crossing to him*, R.H.), the person you sent to keep guard over me is a madman, sir. What do you mean by shutting me up with a madman? What do you mean, sir, I ask?

OVERTON (R.H.C. *Aside to* STRANGE G.) Bravo! bravo! very good indeed—excellent!

STRANGE G. Excellent, sir? It 's horrible. The bare recollection of what I have endured makes me shudder down to my very toe-nails.

MRS. NOAKES (R.H.). Poor dear! Mad people always think other people mad.

STRANGE G. Poor dear, ma'am? What the devil do you mean by "poor dear"? How dare you have a madman here, ma'am, to assault and terrify the visitors to your establishment?

MRS. NOAKES. Ah! terrify indeed! I 'll never have another, to please anybody; you may depend upon that, Mr. Overton. (*To* STRANGE G.) There, there! Don't exert yourself, there 's a dear.

STRANGE G. (C.) Exert myself? Damme! it 's a mercy I have any life left to exert myself with. It 's a special miracle, ma'am, that my existence has not long ago fallen a sacrifice to that sanguinary monster in the leather smalls.

OVERTON (R.C. *aside to* S. G.). I never saw any passion more real in my life. Keep it up—it s an admirable joke.

STRANGE G. Joke—joke? Peril a precious life, and call it a joke! You, a man with a sleek head and a broad-brimmed hat, who ought to know better, calling it a joke! Are you mad too, sir?—are you mad?

[*Confronting* OVERTON.

TOM (L.H. *very loud*). Keep your hands off. Would you murder the wery mayor himself, you mis-rable being?

STRANGE G. Mr. Mayor, I call upon you to issue your warrant for the instant confinement of that one-eyed Orson in some place of security.

OVERTON (*aside, advancing a little*). He reminds me that he had better be removed to his bed-room. He is right. Waiters, carry the gentleman upstairs. Boots, you will continue to watch him in his bed-room.

STRANGE G. *He* continue? What? am I to be boxed up again with this infuriated animal, and killed off when he has done playing with me? I won't go—I won't go. Help, there, help!

[*The* Waiters *cross from* R.H. *to behind him.*

Enter JOHN JOHNSON *hastily*, C. *door.*

JOHN (*coming forward*, L.H.). What on earth is the meaning of this dreadful outcry which disturbs the whole house?

MRS. NOAKES. Don't be alarmed, sir, I beg. They 're only going to carry an unfortunate gentleman, as is out of his senses, to his bed-room.

STRANGE G. (C., *to* JOHN). Constable—constable—do your duty—apprehend these persons—every one of them. Do you hear, officer, do you hear?—(*The* Waiters *seize him by the arms.*)—Here—here—you see this. You 've seen the assault committed. Take them into custody—off with them.

MRS. NOAKES. Poor creature!—He thinks you are a constable, sir.

JOHN. Unfortunate man! it is the second time to-day that he has been the victim of this strange delusion.

STRANGE G. (*breaking from* Waiters *and going to* JOHN, L.H.) Unfortunate man! What, do *you* think I am mad?

JOHN. Poor fellow! his hopeless condition is pitiable indeed. [*Goes up.*

STRANGE G. (*returning to* C.) They 're all mad!—every one of 'em.

MRS. NOAKES. Come, now, come to bed—there's a dear young man, do.

STRANGE G. Who are you, you shameless old ghost, standing there before company, with a large warming-pan, and asking me to come to bed? Are *you* mad?

MRS. NOAKES. Oh! he 's getting shocking now. Take him away, take him away.

OVERTON. Ah, you had better remove him to his bed-room at once.

The Waiters *take him up by the feet and shoulders.*

STRANGE G. Mind, if I survive this, I 'll bring an action of false imprisonment against every one of you. Mark my words, especially against that villanous old mayor. Mind, I 'll do it!

[*They bear him off, struggling and talking—the others crowding round and assisting.*

OVERTON (*following*). How well he does it!

[*Exeunt*, L.H. 1*st* E.

Enter a Waiter, *showing in* CHARLES TOMKINS *in a travelling coat*, C. *door.*

WAITER (L.H.) This room is disengaged now, sir. There *was* a gentleman in it, but he has just left it.

CHARLES. Very well, this will do. I may want a bed here to-night, perhaps, waiter.

WAITER. Yes, sir. Shall I take your card to the bar, sir?

CHARLES. My card!—No, never mind.

WAITER. No name, sir?

CHARLES. No—it doesn't matter.

WAITER (*aside, going out*). *Another* Strange Gentleman! [*Exit* Waiter C. *door.*

CHARLES. Ah! (*takes off coat*). The sun and dust on this long ride have been almost

suffocating. I wonder whether Fanny has arrived? If she has, the sooner we start forward on our journey farther north the better. Let me see: she would be accompanied by her sister, she said in her note, and they would both be on the look-out for me. Then the best thing I can do is to ask no questions, for the present at all events, and to be on the look-out for them. (*Looking towards* C. *door.*) Why, here she comes, walking slowly down the long passage, straight towards this room; she can't have seen me yet. Poor girl, how melancholy she looks! I'll keep in the background for an instant and give her a joyful surprise. [*He goes up* R.H.

Enter FANNY C. *door.*

FANNY (L.H.) Was ever unhappy girl placed in so dreadful a situation? Friendless and almost alone in a strange place. My dear, dear Charles a victim to an attack of mental derangement, and I unable to avow my interest in him, or express my anxious sympathy and solicitude for his sufferings! I cannot bear this dreadful torture of agonizing suspense. I must and will see him, let the cost be what it may. [*She is going* L.H.

CHARLES (*coming forward*, R.H.) Hist! Fanny!

FANNY (*starting and repressing a scream*). Ch—Charles—here in this room?

CHARLES. Bodily present, my dear, in this very room. My darling Fanny, let me strain you to my bosom (*advancing*).

FANNY (*shrinking back*). N--n--no, dearest Charles; no, not now. (*Aside.*) How flushed he is!

CHARLES. No, Fanny! this cold reception is a very different one to what I looked forward to meeting with from you.

FANNY (*advancing and offering the tip of her finger*). N—n—no—not cold, Charles; not cold. I do not mean to be so, indeed. How is your head now, dear?

CHARLES. How is my head! After days and weeks of suspense and anxiety, when half our dangerous journey is gained, and I meet you here, to bear you whither you can be made mine for life, you greet me with the tip of your longest finger, and inquire after my head. Fanny, what can you mean?

FANNY. You—you have startled me rather, Charles. I thought you had gone to bed.

CHARLES. Gone to bed! Why, I have but this moment arrived.

FANNY (*aside*). Poor, poor Charles!

CHARLES. Miss Wilson, what am I to——

FANNY. No, no; pray, pray do not suffer yourself to be excited——

CHARLES. Suffer myself to be excited! Can I possibly avoid it? Can I do aught but wonder at this extraordinary and sudden change in your whole demeanour? Excited! But five minutes since I arrived here, brimful of the hope and expectation which had buoyed up my spirits during my long journey. I find you cold, reserved, embarrassed—everything but what I expected to find you—and then you tell me not to be excited.

FANNY (*aside*). He is wandering again. The fever is evidently upon him.

CHARLES. This altered manner and ill-disguised confusion all convince me of what you would fain conceal. Miss Wilson, you repent of your former determination, and love another.

FANNY. Poor fellow!

CHARLES. Poor fellow! What, am I to be pitied?

FANNY. Oh, Charles! do not give way to this. Consider how much depends upon your being composed.

CHARLES. I see how much depends upon my being composed, ma'am—well, very well. A husband depends upon it, ma'am. Your new lover is in this house, and if he overhears my reproaches, he will become suspicious of the woman who has jilted *another*, and may jilt *him*. That's it, madam: a great deal depends, as you say, upon my being composed, a great deal, ma'am.

FANNY. Alas! these are indeed the ravings of frenzy.

CHARLES. Upon my word, ma'am, you must form a very modest estimate of your power, if you imagine that disappointment has impaired my senses. Ha, ha, ha! I am delighted. I am delighted to have escaped you, ma'am. I am glad, ma'am—damn'd glad! [*Kicks a chair over.*

FANNY (*aside*). I must call for assistance. He grows more incoherent and furious every instant.

CHARLES. I leave you, ma'am. I am unwilling to interrupt the tender *tête-à-tête* with the other gentleman, to which you are, no doubt, anxiously looking forward. To you I have no more to say. To *him* I must beg to offer a few rather unexpected congratulations on his approaching marriage.

[*Exit* CHARLES *hastily*, C. *door.*

FANNY. Alas! it is but too true. His senses have entirely left him. [*Exit* L.H.

SCENE II. AND LAST.

A Gallery in the Inn, leading to the Bed-rooms. Four doors in the flat, and one at each end of the upper entrances, numbered from 20 *to* 25, *beginning at the* R.H. *A pair of boots at the door of* 23.

Enter Chambermaid *with two lights; and* CHARLES TOMKINS, R.H. 1*st* E.

MAID. This is your room, sir, No. 21. (*Opening the door.*)

CHARLES. Very well. Call me at seven in the morning.

MAID. Yes, sir. *Gives him a light, and*

[*Exit* Chambermaid, R.H. 1*st* E.

CHARLES. And at nine, if I can previously obtain a few words of explanation with this

unknown rival, I will just return to the place from whence I came, in the same coach that brought me down here. I wonder who he is and where he sleeps? (*Looking round.*) I have a lurking suspicion of those boots (*pointing to No.* 23). They are an ill-looking, underhanded sort of pair, and an undefinable instinct tells me that they have clothed the feet of the rascal I am in search of. Besides myself, the owner of those ugly articles is the only person who has yet come up to bed. I will keep my eyes open for half an hour or so, and my ears too. [*Exit* CHARLES *into No.* 21.

Enter, R.H. 1*st* E., MRS. NOAKES *with two lights, followed by* MARY *and* FANNY.

MRS. NOAKES. Take care of the last step, ladies. This way, ma'am, if you please. No. 20 is your room, ladies: nice large double-bedded room, with coals and a rushlight.

FANNY, R.H. (*aside to* MARY). I must ask which is his room? I cannot rest unless I know he has at length sunk into the slumber he so much needs. (*Crosses to* MRS. NOAKES, *who is* L.H.) Which is the room in which the Strange Gentleman sleeps?

MRS. NOAKES. No. 23, ma'am. There 's his boots, outside the door. Don't be frightened of him, ladies. He 's very quiet now, and our Boots is watching him.

FANNY. Oh, no! we are not afraid of him. (*Aside.*) Poor Charles!

MRS. NOAKES (*going to door No.* 20, *which is 3rd* E. R.H.) This way, if you please; you'll find everything very comfortable; and there 's a bell-rope at the head of the bed if you want anything in the morning. Good night, ladies.

As MARY *and* FANNY *pass* MRS. NOAKES, FANNY *takes a light.*

[*Exit* FANNY *and* MARY *into No.* 20.

MRS. NOAKES (*tapping at No.* 23). Tom —Tom.

Enter TOM *from No.* 23.

TOM (*coming forward*, L.H.) Is that you, missis?

MRS. NOAKES (R.H.) Yes. How 's the Strange Gentleman, Tom?

TOM. He was very boisterous half an hour ago, but I punched his head a little, and now he 's uncommon comfortable. He 's fallen asleep, but his snores is still very incoherent.

MRS. NOAKES. Mind you take care of him, Tom. They 'll take him away in half an hour's time. It 's very nearly one o'clock now.

TOM. I 'll pay every possible attention to him. If he offers to call out I shall whop him again. [*Exit* TOM *into No.* 23.

MRS. NOAKES (*looking off* R.H.) This way, if you please, ma'am. Up these stairs.

Enter JULIA DOBBS *with a light*, R.H. 1*st* E.

JULIA. Which did you say was the room in which I could arrange my dress for travelling?

MRS. NOAKES. No. 22, ma'am: the next room to your nephew's. Poor dear! he 's fallen asleep, ma'am, and I daresay you 'll be able to take him away very quietly by-and-bye.

JULIA (*aside*). Not so quietly as you imagine, if he plays his part half as well as Overton reports he does. (*To* MRS. N.) Thank you. For the present, good night.

[*Exit* JULIA *into No.* 22.

MRS. NOAKES. Wish you good night, ma'am. There—now I think I may go downstairs again, and see if Mr. Overton wants any more negus. Why, who 's this? (*looking off* R.H.) Oh, I forgot—No. 24 ain't abed yet. It 's him.

Enter JOHN JOHNSON *with a light*, R.H. 1*st* E.

MRS. NOAKES. No. 24, sir, if you please.

JOHN. Yes, yes; I know. The same room I slept in last night. [*Crossing to* L.H.

MRS. NOAKES. Yes, sir. Wish you good night, sir. [*Exit* MRS. NOAKES, R.H. 1*st* E.

JOHN. Good night, ma'am. The same room I slept in last night, indeed, and the same room I may sleep into to-morrow night, and the night after that, and just as many more nights as I can get credit here, unless this remittance arrives. I could raise the money to prosecute my journey without difficulty were I on the spot; but my confounded thoughtless liberality to the postboys has left me absolutely penniless. Well, we shall see what to-morrow brings forth. (*He goes into No.* 24, *but immediately returns and places his boots outside his room door, leaving it ajar.*)

[*Exit* JOHN *into No.* 24.

CHARLES *peeping from No.* 21, *and putting out his boots.*

CHARLES. There 's another pair of boots. Now, I wonder which of these two fellows is the man? I can't help thinking it 's No. 23 —Hallo! [*He goes in and closes his door.*

[*The door of No.* 20 *opens.* FANNY *comes out with a light in a night-shade. No.* 23 *opens. She retires into No.* 20.

Enter TOM SPARKS *with a stable lantern from No.* 23.

TOM (*closing the door gently*). Fast asleep still. I may as well go my rounds and glean for the deputy. (*Pulls out a piece of chalk from his pocket and takes up boots from No.* 23.) Twenty-three. It 's difficult to tell what a feller is ven he hain't got his senses; but I think this here twenty-three 's a timorious faint-hearted genus. (*Examines the boots.*) You want new soleing, No. 23. (*Goes to No.* 24, *takes up boots and looks at them.*) Hallo! here 's a *bust*, and there 's been a piece put on in the corner. I must let missis know. The bill 's always doubtful ven there 's any mending. (*Goes to No.* 21, *takes up boots.*) French calf Vellingtons—all 's right here. These here French calves always comes it strong—light vines, and all that 'ere. (*Looking round.*) Werry happy to see there ain't no high-lows—they never drinks nothing but gin and vater. Them and the cloth boots is the

vurst customers an inn has. The cloth boots is always abstemious, only drinks sherry vine and vater, and never eats no suppers. (*He chalks the number of the room on each pair of boots as he takes them up.*) Lucky for you, my French calves, that you ain't done with the patent polish, or you 'd ha' been witrioled in no time. I don't like to put oil o' witriol on a well-made pair of boots; but ven they 're rubbed vith that 'ere polish, it must be done, or the professions 's ruined.

[*Exit* TOM *with boots*, R.H. 1*st*. E.

Enter FANNY *from No.* 20, *with light as before.*

FANNY. I tremble at the idea of going into his bed-room, but surely at a moment like this, when he is left to be attended by rude and uninterested strangers, the strict rules of propriety which regulate our ordinary proceedings may be dispensed with. I will but satisfy myself that he sleeps, and has those comforts which his melancholy situation demand, and return immediately.

[*Goes to No.* 23 *and knocks.*

Enter CHARLES TOMKINS, *peeping at No.* 21.

CHARLES. I 'll swear I heard a knock. A woman—Fanny Wilson—at that door at this hour of the night! (FANNY *comes forward.*) Why, what an ass I must have been ever to have loved that girl! It *is* No. 23, though; I 'll throttle him presently. The next room door open—I 'll watch there. (*He crosses to No.* 24, *and goes in.*)

[FANNY *returns to No.* 23, *and knocks. The door opens, and the* STRANGE GENTLEMAN *appears, a nightcap on his head and a light in his hand.* FANNY *screams, and runs back to No.* 20.

STRANGE G. (*coming forward*). Well, of all the wonderful and extraordinary houses that ever did exist, this particular tenement is the most extraordinary. I 've got rid of the madman at last; and it 's almost time for that vile old mayor to remove me. But where? I 'm lost, bewildered, confused, and actually begin to think I am mad. Half these things I 've seen to-day must be visions of fancy—they never could have really happened. No, no! I 'm clearly mad—I 've not the least doubt of it now. I 've caught it from that horrid Boots. He has inoculated the whole establishment. We 're all mad together. (*Looking off* R.H.) Lights coming upstairs! Some more lunatics.

[*Exit* STRANGE G. *in No.* 23.

Enter R.H. 1*st* F., OVERTON, *with cloak*, MRS. NOAKES, TOM SPARKS *with lantern, and three* Waiters *with lights. The* Waiters *range up* R.H. *side.* TOM *is in* R.H. *corner, and* MRS. NOAKES *next to him.*

OVERTON. Remain there till I call for your assistance. [*Goes up to No.* 23 *and knocks.*

Enter STRANGE G. *from No.* 23.

Now, the chaise is ready; muffle yourself up in this cloak. (*Puts it on the* STRANGE G. *They come forward.*)

STRANGE G. (L.H.) Yes.

OVERTON (C.) Make a little noise when we take you away, you know.

STRANGE G. Yes, yes! I say, what a queer room this is of mine. Somebody has been tapping at the wall for the last half-hour, like a whole forest of woodpeckers.

OVERTON. Don't you know who that was?

STRANGE G. No.

OVERTON. The other party.

STRANGE G. (*alarmed*). The other party?

OVERTON. To be sure—the other party is going with you.

STRANGE G. Going with me? In the same chaise?

OVERTON. Of course. Hush! (*Goes to No.* 22. *Knocks.*)

Enter JULIA DOBBS *from No.* 22, *wrapped up in a large cloak.*

Look here. (*Bringing her forward.* JULIA *is next to* MRS. NOAKES.)

STRANGE G. (*starting into* L.H. *corner*). I won't go—I won't go. This is a plot—a conspiracy. I won't go, I tell you. I shall be assassinated. I shall be murdered.

FANNY *and* MARY *appear at No.* 20.

JOHNSON *and* TOMKINS *at* 24.

JOHN (*at the door*). I see—I see. Poor fellow!

JULIA (*crossing to* STRANGE GENTLEMAN, *and taking his arm*). Come, dear, come.

MRS. NOAKES. Yes, do go, there 's a good soul. Go with your affectionate aunt.

STRANGE G. (*breaking from her*). My affectionate aunt!

[JULIA *returns to her former position.*

TOM. He don't deserve no affection. I niver see such an unfectionate fellow to his relations.

STRANGE G. (L.H.) Take that wretch away, and smother him between two feather beds. Take him away, and make a sandwich of him directly.

JULIA (*to* OVERTON, *who is in* C.) What voice was that? It was not Lord Peter's.

[*Throwing off her cloak.*

OVERTON. Nonsense—nonsense! Look at him. [*Pulls cloak off* STRANGE G.

STRANGE G. (*turning round*). A woman!

JULIA. A stranger!

OVERTON. A stranger! What, ain't he your husband that is to—your mad nephew, I mean?

JULIA. No.

ALL. No!

STRANGE G. No—no; I 'll be damn'd if I am. I ain't anybody's nephew. My aunt 's dead, and I never had an uncle.

MRS. NOAKES. And ain't he mad, ma'am?

JULIA. No.

STRANGE G. Oh, I 'm *not* mad. I was mistaken just now.

OVERTON. And isn't he going away with you?

JULIA. No.

MARY (*coming forward* R.H., *next to* MRS. NOAKES). And isn't his name Tomkins?

[*All these questions and answers should be very rapid.* JOHNSON *and* TOMKINS *advance to the ladies, and they all retire up.*

MRS. NOAKES. What *is* his name? (*Producing a letter.*) It ain't Mr. Walker Trott, is it? [*She advances a little towards him.*

STRANGE G. Something so remarkably like it, ma'am, that, with your permission, I'll open that epistle. (*Taking letter.*)

[*All go up but* JULIA *and* STRANGE G. (*Opening letter.*) Tinkle's hand. (*Reads.*) "The challenge was a *ruse*. By this time I shall have been united, at Gretna Green, to the charming Emily Brown." Then, through a horror of duels, I have lost a wife.

JULIA (R.H., *with her handkerchief to her eyes*). And, through Lord Peter's negligence, I have lost a husband.

STRANGE G. Eh? (*Regards her a moment, then beckons* OVERTON, *who comes forward*, L.H.) I say, didn t you say something about three thousand a year this morning?

OVERTON. I did.

STRANGE G. You alluded to that party? (*Nodding towards* JULIA.)

OVERTON. I did.

STRANGE G. Hem! (*Puts* OVERTON *back*). Permit me, ma'am (*going to her*), to sympathize most respectfully with your deep distress.

JULIA. Oh, sir! your kindness penetrates to my very heart.

STRANGE G. (*aside*). Penetrates to her heart! it's taking the right direction. If I understand your sorrowing murmur, ma'am, you contemplated taking a destined husband away with you in the chaise at the door?

JULIA. Oh, sir!—spare my feelings. I did. The horses were ordered and paid for, and everything was ready (*weeps*).

STRANGE G. (*aside*). She weeps. Expensive thing posting, ma'am.

JULIA. Very, sir.

STRANGE G. Eighteenpence a mile, ma'am, not including the boys.

JULIA. Yes, sir.

STRANGE G. You've lost a husband, ma'am—I have lost a wife. Marriages are made above—I'm quite certain ours is booked. Pity to have all th' expense for nothing—let's go together.

JULIA (*drying her eyes*). The suddenness of this proposal, sir——

STRANGE G. Requires a sudden answer, ma'am. You don't say no—you mean yes. Permit me to—(*kisses her*). All right, old one!—(*to* OVERTON, *who comes down* L.H.)—I've done it. Mrs. Noakes (*she comes down* R.H.), don't countermand the chaise—we're off directly.

CHARLES (*who, with* FANNY, *comes down* L.H.C.) So are we.

JOHN (*who, with* MARY, *comes down* R.H.C.) So are we—thanks to a negotiated loan, and an explanation as hasty as the quarrel that gave rise to it.

STRANGE G. Three post-chaises and four on to Gretna directly.

[*Exit* Waiters, R.H. 1*st* E.

I say—we'll stop here as we come back?

JOHN *and* CHARLES. Certainly.

STRANGE G. But before I go, as I fear I have given a great deal of trouble here to-night, permit me to inquire whether you will view my mistakes and perils with an indulgent eye, and consent to receive "The Strange Gentleman" again to-morrow?

Costume.

MR. OWEN OVERTON.—Black smalls, and high black boots. A blue body coat, cut rather long in the waist, with yellow buttons, buttoned close up to the chin. A white stock, ditto gloves. A broad-brimmed low-crowned white hat.

STRANGE GENTLEMAN.—A light blue plaid French-cut trousers and vest. A brown cloth frock-coat, with full skirts scarcely covering the hips. A light blue kerchief, and eccentric low-crowned broad-brimmed white hat. Boots.

JOHN JOHNSON.—White fashionable trousers, boots, light vest, frock-coat, black hat, gloves, &c.

CHARLES TOMKINS.—Shepherd's plaid French-cut trousers, boots, mohair fashionable frock-coat, buttoned up, black hat, gloves, &c.

TOM SPARKS.—Leather smalls, striped stockings, and lace-up half-boots, red vest, and a Holland stable-jacket, coloured kerchief, and red wig.

THE WAITERS.—All in black trousers, black stockings and shoes, white vests, striped jackets, and white kerchiefs.

MARY WILSON.—Fashionable walking dress, white silk stockings, shoes, and gloves.

FANNY WILSON.—Precisely the same as Mary.

JULIA DOBBS.—A handsome white travelling dress, cashmere shawl, white silk stockings, shoes, and gloves. A bonnet to correspond.

MRS. NOAKES.—A chintz gown, rather of a dark pattern, French apron, and handsome cap.

IS SHE HIS WIFE?

OR,

SOMETHING SINGULAR.

First performed at St. James's Theatre, London; Monday, March 6, 1837.

Dramatis Personæ.

ALFRED LOVETOWN, ESQ.	MR. FORESTER.
MR. PETER LIMBURY	MR. GARDNER.
FELIX TAPKINS, ESQ.	MR. HARLEY.
[Formerly of the India House, Leadenhall Street, and Prospect Place, Poplar; but now of the Rustic Lodge, near Reading.]	
JOHN (*servant to* LOVETOWN)	
MRS. LOVETOWN	MRS. ALLISON.
MRS. PETER LIMBURY	MADAME SALA.

SCENE I.

A Room opening into a Garden. A table laid for breakfast; chairs, &c. MR. *and* MRS. LOVETOWN, C., *discovered at breakfast,* R.H. *The former in a dressing-gown and slippers, reading a newspaper. A screen on one side.*

LOVETOWN (L.H. *of table, yawning*). Another cup of tea, my dear. Oh, lord!

MRS. LOVETOWN (R.H. *of table*). I wish, Alfred, you would endeavour to assume a more cheerful appearance in your wife's society. If you are perpetually yawning and complaining of *ennui* a few months after marriage, what am I to suppose you 'll become in a few years? It really is very odd.

LOVETOWN. Not at all odd, my dear, not the least in the world; it would be a great deal more odd if I were not. The fact is, my love, I 'm tired of the country: green fields, and blooming hedges, and feathered songsters are fine things to talk about, and read about, and write about; but I candidly confess that I prefer paved streets, area railings, and dustman's bells, after all.

MRS. LOVETOWN. How often have you told me that, blessed with my love, you could live contented and happy in a desert?

LOVETOWN (*reading*). "Artful impostor!"

MRS. LOVETOWN. Have you not over and over again said that fortune and personal attractions were secondary considerations with you? That you loved me for those virtues which, while they gave additional lustre to public life, would adorn and sweeten retirement?

LOVETOWN (*reading*). "Soothing syrup!"

MRS. LOVETOWN. You complain of the tedious sameness of a country life. Was it not you yourself who first proposed our residing permanently in the country? Did you not say that I should then have ample sphere in which to exercise those charitable feelings which I have so often evinced, by selling at those benevolent fancy fairs?

LOVETOWN (*reading*). "Humane man-traps!"

MRS. LOVETOWN. He pays no attention to me. Alfred, dear——

LOVETOWN (*stamping his foot*). Yes, my life.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Have you heard what I have just been saying, dear?

LOVETOWN. Yes, love.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And what can you say in reply?

LOVETOWN. Why, really, my dear, you 've said it so often before in the course of the last six weeks, that I think it quite unnecessary to say anything more about it. (*Reads.*) "The learned judge delivered a brief but impressive summary of the unhappy man's trial."

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside*). I could bear anything but this neglect. He evidently does not care for me.

LOVETOWN (*aside*). I could put up with anything rather than these constant altercations and little petty quarrels. I repeat, my dear, that I am very dull in this out-of-the-way villa—confoundedly dull, horribly dull.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And *I* repeat that if you took any pleasure in your wife's society, or felt for her as you once professed to feel, you would have no cause to make such a complaint.

LOVETOWN. If I did not know you to be one of the sweetest creatures in existence, my dear, I should be strongly disposed to say that you were a very close imitation of an aggravating female.

MRS. LOVETOWN. That 's very curious, my dear, for I declare that, if I hadn't known

you to be such an exquisite, good-tempered, attentive husband, I should have mistaken you for a very great brute.

LOVETOWN. My dear, you 're offensive.

MRS. LOVETOWN. My love, you 're intolerable. [*They turn their chairs back to back.*

MR. FELIX TAPKINS, *sings without.*

"The wife around her husband throws
Her arms to make him stay;
'My dear, it rains, it hails, it blows,
And you cannot hunt to-day.'
But a-hunting we will go,
And a-hunting we will go—wo—wo—wo!
And a-hunting we will go."

MRS. LOVETOWN. There 's that dear good-natured creature, Mr. Tapkins. Do you ever hear *him* complain of the tediousness of a country life? Light-hearted creature! his lively disposition and rich flow of spirits are wonderful, even to me. [*Rising.*

LOVETOWN. They need not be matter of astonishment to anybody, my dear,—he 's a bachelor.

MR. FELIX TAPKINS *appears at window*, L.H.

TAPKINS. Ha, ha! How are you both? Here 's a morning! Bless my heart alive, *what* a morning! I 've been gardening ever since five o'clock, and the flowers have been actually growing before my very eyes. The London Pride is sweeping everything before it, and the stalks are half as high again as they were yesterday. They 're all run up like so many tailors' bills, after that heavy dew of last night broke down half my rosebuds with the weight of its own moisture—something like a dew that; reg'lar *doo*, eh? Come, that 's not so bad for a before-dinner one.

LOVETOWN. Ah, you happy dog, Felix!

TAPKINS. Happy? Of course I am,—Felix by name, Felix by nature. What the deuce should I be unhappy for, or anybody be unhappy for? What 's the use of it? that 's the point.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Have you finished your improvements yet, Mr. Tapkins?

TAPKINS. At Rustic Lodge? (*she nods assent.*) Bless your heart and soul! you never saw such a place,—cardboard chimneys, Grecian balconies, Gothic parapets, thatched roof.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Indeed?

TAPKINS. Lord bless you, yes. Green verandah, with ivy twining round the pillars.

MRS. LOVETOWN. How very rural!

TAPKINS. Rural, my dear Mrs. Lovetown! delightful! The French windows, too. Such an improvement!

MRS. LOVETOWN. I should think they were.

TAPKINS. Yes, *I* should think they were. Why, on a fine summer's evening the frogs hop off the grass-plot into the very sitting-room.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Dear me!

TAPKINS. Bless you, yes! Something like the country,—quite a little Eden. Why, when I 'm smoking under the verandah, after a shower of rain, the blackbeetles fall into my brandy and water.

MR. *and* MRS. LOVETOWN. No! ha! ha! ha!

TAPKINS. Yes. And I take 'em out again with the teaspoon, and lay bets with myself which of them will run away the quickest. Ha! ha! ha! (*They all laugh.*) Then the stable, too. Why, in Rustic Lodge the stables are close to the dining-room window.

LOVETOWN. No!

TAPKINS. Yes. The horse can't cough, but I hear him. There 's compactness! Nothing like the cottage style of architecture for comfort, my boy. By-the-bye, I have left the new horse at your garden gate this moment.

MRS. LOVETOWN. The new horse!

TAPKINS. The new horse! Splendid fellow—such action! Puts out its feet like a rocking-horse, and carries its tail like a hat-peg. Come and see him.

LOVETOWN (*laughing*). I can't deny you anything.

TAPKINS. No, that 's what they all say, especially the—eh? [*Nodding and winking.*

LOVETOWN. Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. LOVETOWN. Ha! ha! ha! I 'm afraid you 're a very bad man, Mr. Tapkins—I 'm afraid you 're a shocking man, Mr. Tapkins.

TAPKINS. Think so? No, I don't know—not worse than other people similarly situated. Bachelors, my dear Mrs. Lovetown; bachelors. Eh, old fellow? [*Winking to Lovetown.*

LOVETOWN. Certainly—certainly.

TAPKINS. *We* know, eh? (*They all laugh.*) By-the-bye, talking of bachelors puts me in mind of Rustic Lodge; and talking of Rustic Lodge puts me in mind of what I came here for. You must come and see me this afternoon. Little Peter Limbury and his wife are coming.

MRS. LOVETOWN. I detest that man.

LOVETOWN. The wife is supportable, my dear.

TAPKINS. To be sure; so she is. You 'll come, and that 's enough. Now come and see the horse.

LOVETOWN. Give me three minutes to put on my coat and boots and I 'll join you. I won't be three minutes.

[*Exit* LOVETOWN, R.H.

TAPKINS. Look sharp—look sharp. Mrs. Lovetown, will you excuse me one moment? (*Crosses to* L., *calling off.*) Jim—these fellows never know how to manage horses—walk him gently up and down. Throw the stirrups over the saddle, to show the people that his master 's coming; and if anybody asks what that fine animal 's pedigree is, and who he belongs to, say he 's the property of Mr. Felix Tapkins, of Rustic Lodge, near Reading, and that he 's the celebrated horse who ought to have won the Newmarket Cup last year, only he didn't.

[*Exit* TAPKINS.

MRS. LOVETOWN. My mind is made up. I can bear Alfred's coldness and insensibility no longer, and, come what may, I will endeavour to remove it. From the knowledge I have of his disposition, I am convinced that the only mode of doing so will be by rousing his jealousy and wounding his vanity. This thoughtless creature will be a very good instrument for my scheme. He plumes himself on his gallantry, has no very small share of vanity, and is easily led. I see him crossing the garden.

[*She brings a chair hastily forward and sits*, R.H.

Enter FELIX TAPKINS, L.H. *window.*

TAPKINS (*singing*). "My dear, it rains, it hails, it blows——"

MRS. LOVETOWN (*tragically*). Would that I had never beheld him.

TAPKINS (*aside*). Hallo! She's talking about her husband. I knew by their manner there had been a quarrel when I came in this morning.

MRS. LOVETOWN. So fascinating and yet so insensible to the tenderest of passions as not to see how devotedly I love him.

TAPKINS (*aside*). I thought so.

MRS. LOVETOWN. That he should still remain unmarried is to me extraordinary.

TAPKINS. Um!

MRS. LOVETOWN. He ought to have married long since.

TAPKINS (*aside*). Eh! Why, they aren't married. "Ought to have married long since." I rather think he ought.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And though I am the wife of another——

TAPKINS (*aside*). Wife of another!

MRS. LOVETOWN. Still, I grieve to say that I cannot be blind to his extraordinary merits.

TAPKINS. Why, he's run away with somebody else's wife. The villain! I must let her know I 'm in the room, or there's no telling what I may hear next. [*Coughs.*

MRS. LOVETOWN (*starting up in affected confusion*). Mr. Tapkins! (*They sit.*) Bring your chair nearer. I fear, Mr. Tapkins, that I have been unconsciously giving utterance to what was passing in my mind. I trust you have not overheard my confession of the weakness of my heart.

TAPKINS. No, no; not more than a word or two.

MRS. LOVETOWN. That agitated manner convinces me that you have heard more than you are willing to confess. Then why—why should I seek to conceal from you that, though I esteem my husband, I—I—love—another?

TAPKINS. I heard you mention that little circumstance.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Oh! [*Sighs.*

TAPKINS (*aside*). What the deuce is she Oh!-ing at? She looks at me as if I were Lovetown himself.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*putting her hand on his shoulder with a languishing air*). Does my selection meet with your approbation?

TAPKINS (*slowly*). It doesn't.

MRS. LOVETOWN. No?

TAPKINS. Decidedly not! (*Aside.*) I 'll cut that Lovetown out, and offer myself. Hem! Mrs. Lovetown.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Yes, Mr. Tapkins?

TAPKINS. I know an individual——

MRS. LOVETOWN. Ah! an individual.

TAPKINS. An individual—I may, perhaps, venture to say an estimable individual—who for the last three months has been constantly in your society, who never yet had courage to disclose his passion, but who burns to throw himself at your feet. Oh! (*Aside.*) I ll try an Oh! or two now—Oh! (*Sighs.*) That 's a capital Oh!

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside*). He must have misunderstood me before, for he is evidently speaking of himself. Is the gentleman you speak of handsome, Mr. Tapkins?

TAPKINS. He is generally considered remarkably so.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Is he tall?

TAPKINS. About the height of the Apollo Belvedere.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Is he stout?

TAPKINS. Of nearly the same dimensions as the gentleman I have just named.

MRS. LOVETOWN. His figure is——

TAPKINS. Quite a model.

MRS. LOVETOWN. And he is——

TAPKINS. Myself. (*Throws himself on his knees and seizes her hand.*)

Enter LOVETOWN, R.H.

TAPKINS *immediately pretends to be diligently looking for something on the floor.*

MRS. LOVETOWN. Pray don't trouble yourself; I 'll find it. Dear me! how could I lose it?

LOVETOWN. What have you lost, love? I should almost imagine that you had lost yourself, and that your friend Mr. Tapkins here had just found you.

TAPKINS (*aside*). Ah, you always will have your joke—funny dog!—funny dog! Bless my heart and soul, there 's that immortal horse standing outside all this time! He 'll catch his death of cold. Come and see him at once—come—come.

LOVETOWN. No; I can't see him to-day. I had forgotten. I 've letters to write—business to transact—I 'm engaged.

TAPKINS (*to* MRS. LOVETOWN). Oh! if he 's engaged, you know, we 'd better not interrupt him.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Oh, certainly! Not by any means.

TAPKINS (*taking her arm*). Good bye, old fellow.

LOVETOWN (*seating himself at table*). Oh! good bye.

TAPKINS (*going*). Take care of yourself; I 'll take care of Mrs. L.

[*Exit* TAPKINS *and* MRS. LOVETOWN, C.

LOVETOWN. What the deuce does that fellow mean by laying such emphasis on Mrs. L.? What 's my wife to him, or he to my wife? Very extraordinary. I can hardly believe that, even if he had the treachery to make any advances, she would encourage such a preposterous intrigue. (*Walks to and fro.*) She spoke in his praise at breakfast-time, though, and they have gone away together to see that confounded horse. But stop, I must keep a sharp eye upon them this afternoon, without appearing to do so. I would not appear unnecessarily suspicious for the world. Dissembling in such a case, though, is difficult—very difficult.

Enter a Servant, L.H.

SERVANT. Mr. and Mrs. Peter Limbury.

LOVETOWN. Desire them to walk in.

[*Exit* Servant, L.H.

A lucky visit; it furnishes me with a hint. This Mrs. Limbury is a vain, conceited woman, ready to receive the attentions of anybody who feigns admiration for her, partly to gratify herself, and partly to annoy the jealous little husband whom she keeps under such strict control. If I pay particular attention to *her*, I shall lull my wife and that scoundrel Tapkins into a false security, and have better opportunities of observation. They are here.

Enter MR. *and* MRS. LIMBURY, L.H.

LOVETOWN. My dear Mrs. Limbury.

LIMBURY. Eh? [*Crosses to* C.

LOVETOWN (*not regarding him*). How charming! — how delightful! — how divine you look to-day!

LIMBURY (*aside*). Dear Mrs. Limbury—charming—divine and beautiful look to-day! They are smiling at each other! He squeezes her hand! I see how it is. I always thought he paid her too much attention.

LOVETOWN. Sit down—sit down. (LOVETOWN *places the chairs so as to sit between them, which* LIMBURY *in vain endeavours to prevent.*)

MRS. LIMBURY. Peter and I called, as we passed in our little pony chaise, to inquire whether we should have the pleasure of seeing you at Tapkins's this afternoon?

LOVETOWN. Is it possible you can ask such a question? Do you think I could stay away?

MRS. LIMBURY. Dear Mr. Lovetown. (*Aside.*) How polite!—he 's quite struck with me.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Wretched miscreant! a regular assignation before my very face.

LOVETOWN (*to* MRS. LIMBURY). Do you know I entertained some apprehensions—some dreadful fears—that you might not be there.

LIMBURY. Fears that we mightn't be there! Of course we shall be there.

MRS. LIMBURY. Now, don't talk, Peter.

LOVETOWN. I thought it just possible, you know, that you might not be agreeable——

MRS. LIMBURY. Oh! Peter is always agreeable to anything that is agreeable to me. Aren't you, Peter?

LIMBURY. Yes, dearest. (*Aside.*) Agreeable to anything that 's agreeable to her. Oh, lor!

MRS. LIMBURY. By-the-bye, Mr. Lovetown, how do you like this bonnet?

LOVETOWN. Oh, beautiful!

LIMBURY (*aside*). I must change the subject. Do you know, Mr. Lovetown, I have often thought, and it has frequently occurred to me, when——

MRS. LIMBURY. Now, don't talk, Peter. (*To* LOVETOWN.) The colour is so bright, is it not?

LOVETOWN. It might appear so elsewhere, but the brightness of those eyes casts it quite into the shade.

MRS. LIMBURY. I know you are a connoisseur in ladies' dresses. How do you like those shoes?

LIMBURY (*aside*). Her shoes! What will she ask his opinion of next?

LOVETOWN. Oh, like the bonnet, you deprive them of their fair chance of admiration. That small and elegant foot engrosses all the attention which the shoes might otherwise attract. That taper ankle, too.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Her taper ankle! My bosom swells with the rage of an ogre. Mr. Lovetown, I——

MRS. LIMBURY. Now, pray do not talk so, Limbury, you 've put Mr. Lovetown out as it is.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Put him out? I wish I could put him out, Mrs. Limbury. I must——

Enter Servant, *hastily.*

SERVANT. I beg your pardon, sir, but the bay pony has got his hind leg over the traces, and he 's kicking the chaise to pieces.

LIMBURY. Kicking the *new* chaise to pieces?

LOVETOWN. Kicking the new chaise to pieces—the bay pony. Limbury, my dear fellow, fly to the spot. [*Pushing him out.*

LIMBURY. But, Mr. Lovetown, I——

MRS. LIMBURY. Oh! he 'll kick somebody's brains out if Peter don't go to him.

LIMBURY. But perhaps he 'll kick *my* brains out if I do go to him.

LOVETOWN. Never mind, don't lose an instant—not a moment. (*Pushes him out, both talking together.*) [*Exit* LIMBURY. (*Aside.*) Now for it—here's my wife. Dearest Mrs. Limbury.

[*Kneels by her side and kisses her hand.*

Enter MRS. LOVETOWN, C.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside*). Can I believe my eyes? [*Retires behind the screen.*

MRS. LIMBURY. Mr. Lovetown——

LOVETOWN. Nay, allow me in one hurried interview, which I have sought for in vain for weeks—for months—to say how devotedly, how ardently I love you. Suffer me to retain

this hand in mine. Give me one ray of hope.

MRS. LIMBURY. Rise, I entreat you. We shall be discovered.

LOVETOWN. Nay, I will not rise till you promise me that you will take an opportunity of detaching yourself from the rest of the company, and meeting me alone in Tapkins's grounds this evening. I shall have no eyes no ears for any one but yourself.

MRS. LIMBURY. Well, well—I will—I do.

LOVETOWN. Then I am blest indeed.

MRS. LIMBURY. I am so agitated. If Peter or Mrs. Lovetown were to find me thus I should betray all. I'll teach my husband to be jealous! (*Crosses to* L.H.) Let us walk round the garden.

LOVETOWN. With pleasure. Take my arm. Divine creature! (*Aside.*) I'm sure she is behind the screen, I saw her peeping.—Come.

[*Exit* LOVETOWN *and* MRS. LIMBURY, L.H.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*coming forward.*) Faithless man! his coldness and neglect are now too well explained. Oh, Alfred! Alfred! how little did I think when I married you six short months since that I should be exposed to so much wretchedness! I begin to tremble at my own imprudence, and the situation in which it may place me; but it is now too late to recede. I must be firm. This day will either bring my project to the explanation I so much desire, or convince me of what I too much fear—my husband's aversion. Can this woman s husband suspect their intimacy? If so, he may be able to prevent this assignation taking place. I will seek him instantly. If I can but meet him at once, he may prevent her going at all. [*Exit*, R.H.

Enter TAPKINS, L.H. *window.*

TAPKINS. This certainly is a most extraordinary affair. Not her partiality for me—that's natural enough—but the confession I overheard about her marriage to another. I have been thinking that after such a discovery it would be highly improper to allow Limbury and his wife to meet her without warning him of the fact. The best way will be to make him acquainted with the real state of the case. Then he must see the propriety of not bringing his wife to my house to-night. Ah! here he is. I'll make the awful disclosure at once, and petrify him.

Enter LIMBURY, L.H. *window.*

LIMBURY. That damned little bay pony is as bad as my wife: there's no curbing either of them; and as soon as I have got the traces of the one all right, I lose all traces of the other.

TAPKINS (R.) Peter!

LIMBURY (L.) Ah! Tapkins!

TAPKINS. Hush! Hush! (*Looking cautiously round.*) If you have a moment to spare, I've got something of great importance to communicate.

LIMBURY. Something of great importance, Mr. Tapkins! (*Aside.*) What can he mean? Can it relate to Mrs. Limbury? The thought is dreadful. You horrify me!

TAPKINS. You'll be more horrified presently. What I am about to tell you concerns yourself and your honour very materially; and I beg you to understand that I communicate it in the strictest confidence.

LIMBURY. Myself and my honour! I shall dissolve into nothing with horrible anticipations!

TAPKINS (*in a low tone*). Have you ever observed anything remarkable about Lovetown's manner?

LIMBURY. Anything remarkable?

TAPKINS. Ay,—anything very odd, and rather unpleasant.

LIMBURY. Decidedly. No longer than half an hour ago, in this very room, I observed something in his manner particularly odd and exceedingly unpleasant.

TAPKINS. To your feelings as a husband?

LIMBURY. Yes, my friend, yes, yes,—you know all, I see.

TAPKINS. What! do *you* know it?

LIMBURY. I'm afraid I do; but go on—go on.

TAPKINS (*aside*). How the deuce can he know anything about it? Well, this oddness arises from the peculiar nature of his connection with—you look very pale.

LIMBURY. No, no—go on—"connection with"——

TAPKINS. A certain lady—you know whom I mean.

LIMBURY. I do, I do! (*Aside.*) Disgrace and confusion! I'll kill her with a look! I'll wither her with scornful indignation! Mrs. Limbury!—viper!

TAPKINS (*whispering with caution*). They—aren't—married.

LIMBURY. *They* aren't married! *Who* aren't?

TAPKINS. Those two, to be sure.

LIMBURY. *Those* two! *What* two?

TAPKINS. Why, them. And the worst of it is she's—she's married to somebody else.

LIMBURY. Well, of course I know that.

TAPKINS. You know it?

LIMBURY. Of course I do. Why, how you talk! Isn't she my wife?

TAPKINS. *Your* wife! Wretched bigamist! Mrs. Lovetown your wife?

LIMBURY. Mrs. Lovetown! What, have you been talking of Mrs. Lovetown all this time? My dear friend—(*embraces him*)—the revulsion of feeling is almost insupportable. I thought you were talking about Mrs. Limbury.

TAPKINS. No.

LIMBURY. Yes. Ha! ha! But I say, what a dreadful fellow this is—another man's wife! Gad, I think he wants to run away with every man's wife he sees. And Mrs. Lovetown, too—horrid!

TAPKINS. Shocking!

LIMBURY. I say, I oughtn't to allow Mrs. Limbury to associate with her, ought I?

TAPKINS. Precisely my idea. You had better induce your wife to stay away from my house to-night.

LIMBURY. I 'm afraid I can't do that.

TAPKINS. What, has she any particular objection to staying away?

LIMBURY. She has a very strange inclination to go, and 't is much the same. However, I 'll make the best arrangement I can.

TAPKINS. Well, so be it. Of course I shall see *you?*

LIMBURY. Of course.

TAPKINS. Mind the secret—close, you know, as a cabinet minister answering a question.

LIMBURY. You may rely upon me.

[*Exit* LIMBURY, L.H., TAPKINS, R.H.

SCENE II.

A Conservatory on one side. A Summer-house on the other.

Enter LOVETOWN *at* L.H.

LOVETOWN. So far so good. My wife has not dropped the slightest hint of having overheard the conversation between me and Mrs. Limbury; but she cannot conceal the impression it has made upon her mind, or the jealousy it has evidently excited in her breast. This is just as I wished. I made Mr. Peter Limbury's amiable helpmate promise to meet me here. I know that refuge for destitute reptiles (*pointing to summer-house*) is Tapkins's favourite haunt; and if he has any assignation with my wife, I have no doubt he will lead her to this place. A woman 's coming down the walk. Mrs. Limbury, I suppose. No; my wife, by all that 's actionable. I must conceal myself here, even at the risk of a shower of blackbeetles, or a marching regiment of frogs. [*Goes into conservatory*, L.H.

Enter MRS. LOVETOWN *from top*, L.H.

MRS. LOVETOWN. I cannot have been mistaken. I am certain I saw Alfred here. He must have secreted himself somewhere to avoid me. Can his assignation with Mrs. Limbury have been discovered? Mr. Limbury's behaviour to me just now was strange in the extreme, and, after a variety of incoherent expressions, he begged me to meet him here on a subject, as he said, of great delicacy and importance to myself. Alas! I fear that my husband's neglect and unkindness are but too well known. The injured little man approaches. I summon all my fortitude to bear the disclosure.

Enter MR. LIMBURY *at top*, L.H.

LIMBURY (*aside*). Now, as I could not prevail on Mrs. Limbury to stay away, the only distressing alternative I have is to inform Mrs. Lovetown that I know her history, and to put it to her good feeling whether she hadn't better go.

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Limbury! What the deuce can that little wretch want here?

LIMBURY. I took the liberty, Mrs. Lovetown, of begging you to meet me in this retired spot, because the esteem I still entertain for you, and my regard for your feelings, induce me to prefer a private to a public disclosure.

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). "Public disclosure!" What on earth is he talking about? I wish he 'd speak a little louder.

MRS. LOVETOWN. I am sensible of your kindness, Mr. Limbury, and believe me most grateful for it. I am fully prepared to hear what you have to say.

LIMBURY. It is hardly necessary for me, I presume, to say, Mrs. Lovetown, that I have accidentally discovered the whole secret.

MRS. LOVETOWN. The whole secret, sir?

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Whole secret! What secret?

LIMBURY. The whole secret, ma'am, of this disgraceful—I must call it disgraceful—and most abominable intrigue.

MRS. LOVETOWN (*aside*). My worst fears are realized. My husband's neglect is occasioned by his love for another.

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Abominable intrigue! My first suspicions are too well founded. He reproaches my wife with her infidelity, and she cannot deny it. That villain Tapkins!

MRS. LOVETOWN (*weeping*). Cruel, cruel Alfred!

LIMBURY. You may well call him cruel, unfortunate woman! His usage of you is indefensible, unmanly, scandalous.

MRS. LOVETOWN. It is—it is, indeed.

LIMBURY. It 's very painful for me to express myself in such plain terms, Mrs. Lovetown, but allow me to say, as delicately as possible, that you should not endeavour to appear in society under such unusual and distressing circumstances.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Not appear in society? Why should I quit it?

LOVETOWN (*peeping*). Shameful woman!

LIMBURY. Is it possible you can ask such a question?

MRS. LOVETOWN. What should I do? Where can I go?

LIMBURY. Gain permission to return once more again to your husband's roof.

MRS. LOVETOWN. My husband's roof?

LIMBURY. Yes, the roof of your husband—your wretched, unfortunate husband!

MRS. LOVETOWN. Never!

LIMBURY (*aside*). She 's thoroughly hardened—steeped in vice beyond redemption. Mrs. Lovetown, as you reject my well-intentioned advice in this extraordinary manner, I am reduced to the painful necessity of expressing my hope that you will—now, pray don't think me unkind—that you will never attempt to meet Mrs. Limbury more.

MRS. LOVETOWN. What! can you suppose I am so utterly dead to every sense of feeling and propriety as to meet that person—the

destroyer of my peace and happiness—the wretch who has ruined my hopes and blighted my prospects for ever? Ask your own heart, sir; appeal to your own feelings. *You* are naturally indignant at her conduct; *you* would hold no further communication with her. Can you suppose, then, *I* would deign to do so? The mere supposition is an insult!

[*Exit* MRS. LOVETOWN, *hastily at top*, L.H.

LIMBURY. What can all this mean? I am lost in a maze of astonishment, petrified with the boldness with which she braves it out. Eh! it's breaking upon me by degrees. I see it. What did she say? "Destroyer of peace and happiness—person—ruined hopes and blighted prospects—*her*." I see it all. That atrocious Lovetown, that Don Juan multiplied by twenty, that unprecedented libertine, has seduced Mrs. Limbury from her allegiance to her lawful lord and master. He first of all runs away with the wife of another man, and he is no sooner tired of her than he runs away with another wife of another man. I thirst for his destruction. I—(LOVETOWN *rushes from the conservatory and embraces* LIMBURY, *who disengages himself.*) Murderer of domestic happiness, behold your victim!

LOVETOWN. Alas! you speak but too truly (*covering his face with his hands*). I am the victim.

LIMBURY. I speak but too truly! He avows his own criminality. I shall throttle him. I know I shall. I feel it.

Enter MRS. LIMBURY *at back*, L.H.

MRS. LIMBURY (*aside*). My husband here!

[*Goes into conservatory.*

Enter TAPKINS *at back*, L.H.

TAPKINS (*aside*). Not here; and her husband with Limbury. I 'll *reconnoitre.*

[*Goes into summer-house*, R.H.

LIMBURY. Lovetown, have you the boldness to look an honest man in the face?

LOVETOWN. Oh, spare me! I feel the situation in which I am placed acutely—deeply. Feel for me when I say that from that conservatory I overheard the greater part of what passed between you and Mrs. Lovetown.

LIMBURY. You did?

LOVETOWN. Need I say how highly I approve both of the language you used and the advice you gave her?

LIMBURY. What! you want to get rid of her, do you?

LOVETOWN. Can you doubt it?

TAPKINS (*peeping*). Hallo! he wants to get rid of her. Queer!

LOVETOWN. Situated as I am, you know, I have no other resource, after what has passed. I must part from her.

MRS. LIMBURY (*peeping*). What can he mean?

LIMBURY (*aside*). I should certainly throttle him, were it not that the coolness with which he refers to the dreadful event paralyses me. Mr. Lovetown, look at me, sir; consider the feelings of an indignant husband, sir.

LOVETOWN. Oh! I thank you for those words. Those strong expressions prove the unaffected interest you take in the matter.

LIMBURY. Unaffected interest! I shall go raving mad with passion and fury. Villain! monster! to embrace the opportunity afforded him of being on a footing of friendship.

LOVETOWN. To take a mean advantage of his being a single man.

LIMBURY. To tamper with the sacred engagements of a married woman.

LOVETOWN. To place a married man in a disgraceful and humiliating situation.

LIMBURY. Scoundrel! do you mock me to my face?

LOVETOWN. Mock *you?* What d'ye mean? Who the devil are you talking about?

LIMBURY. Talking about—*you!*

LOVETOWN. Me?

LIMBURY. Designing miscreant! of whom do *you* speak?

LOVETOWN. Of whom should I speak but that scoundrel Tapkins?

TAPKINS (*coming forward*, R.) Me? What the devil do you mean by that?

LOVETOWN. Ha! (*Rushing at him, is held back by* LIMBURY.)

LIMBURY (*to* TAPKINS). Avoid him. Get out of his sight. He 's raving mad with conscious villany.

TAPKINS. What are you all playing at *I spy I* over my two acres of infant hay for?

LOVETOWN (*to* TAPKINS). How dare you tamper with the affections of Mrs. Lovetown?

TAPKINS. Oh, is that all? Ha! ha!

LOVETOWN. All! [*Crosses to* C.

TAPKINS. Come, come, none of your nonsense.

LOVETOWN. Nonsense! Designate the best feelings of our nature—nonsense!

TAPKINS. Pooh! pooh! Here, I know all about it.

LOVETOWN (*angrily*). And so do I, sir. And so do I.

TAPKINS. Of course you do. And you 've managed very well to keep it quiet so long. But you 're a deep fellow, by Jove! you 're a deep fellow.

LOVETOWN. Now, mind. I restrain myself sufficiently to ask you once again, before I knock you down, by what right dare you tamper with the affections of Mrs. Lovetown?

TAPKINS. Right. Oh, if you come to strict right, you know, nobody has a right but her husband.

LOVETOWN. And who is her husband? Who is her husband?

TAPKINS. Ah! to be sure, that 's the question. Nobody that I know. I hope, poor fellow——

LOVETOWN. I 'll bear these insults no longer.

[*Rushes towards* TAPKINS. LIMBURY *interposes.* LOVETOWN *crosses to* R. H. *A scream is heard from the conservatory. A pause.*

TAPKINS. Something singular among the plants. (*He goes into the conservatory and returns with* MRS. LIMBURY.) A flower that wouldn't come out of its own accord. I was obliged to force it. Tolerably full blown now, at all events.

LIMBURY. My wife! Traitoress! (*Crosses to* L.H.) Fly from my presence! Quit my sight! Return to the conservatory with that demon in a frock-coat!

Enter MRS. LOVETOWN *at top,* L.H., *and comes down* C.

TAPKINS. Hallo! Somebody else!

LOVETOWN (*aside*). My wife here!

MRS. LOVETOWN (*to* LIMBURY). I owe you some return for the commiseration you expressed just now for my wretched situation. The best, the only one I can make you is to entreat you to refrain from committing any rash act, however excited you may be, and to control the feelings of an injured husband.

TAPKINS. Injured husband? Decidedly singular!

LOVETOWN. The allusion of that lady I confess my utter inability to understand. Mr. Limbury, to you an explanation is due, and I make it more cheerfully, as my abstaining from doing so might involve the character of your wife. Stung by the attentions which I found Mrs. Lovetown had received from a scoundrel present——

TAPKINS (*aside*). That 's me.

LOVETOWN. I—partly to obtain opportunities of watching her closely, under an assumed mask of levity and carelessness, and partly in the hope of awaking once again any dormant feelings of affection that might still slumber in her breast—affected a passion for your wife which I never felt, and to which she never really responded. The second part of my project, I regret to say, has failed. The first has succeeded but too well.

LIMBURY. Can I believe my ears? But how came Mrs. Peter Limbury to receive those attentions?

MRS. LIMBURY. Why, not because I liked them, of course, but to assist Mr. Lovetown in his project, and to teach you the misery of those jealous fears. Come here, you stupid little jealous, insinuating darling.

[*They retire up* L.H., *she coaxing him.*

TAPKINS (*aside*). It strikes me very forcibly that I have made a slight mistake here, which is something particularly singular.

[*Turns up* R.H.

MRS. LOVETOWN. Alfred, hear me. I am as innocent as yourself. Your fancied neglect and coldness hurt my weak vanity, and roused some foolish feelings of angry pride. In a moment of irritation I resorted to some such retaliation as you have yourself described. That I did so from motives as guiltless as your own I call Heaven to witness. That I repent my fault I solemnly assure you.

LOVETOWN. Is this possible?

TAPKINS. Very possible indeed. Believe your wife's assurance, and my corroboration. Here, give and take is all fair, you know. Give me your hand and take your wife's. Here, Mr. and Mrs. L. (*To* LIMBURY.) Double L, I call them. (*To* LOVETOWN.) Small italic and Roman capital. (*To* MR. *and* MRS. LIMBURY, *who come forward.*) Here, it 's all arranged. The key to the whole matter is that I 've been mistaken, which is something singular. If I have made another mistake in calculating on *your* kind and lenient reception of our last half-hour's misunderstanding (*to the audience*) I shall have done something more singular still. Do you forbid me committing any more mistakes, or may I announce my intention of doing Something Singular again?

THE LAMPLIGHTER.

A Farce.

By CHARLES DICKENS.

1838.

Now first printed from a manuscript in the Forster Collection at the South Kensington Museum.

Dramatis Personæ.

MR. STARGAZER.
MASTER GALILEO ISAAC NEWTON HAMSTEAD STARGAZER (*his son*).
TOM GRIG (*the Lamplighter*).
MR. MOONEY (*an Astrologer*).
SERVANT.
BETSY MARTIN.
EMMA STARGAZER.
FANNY BROWN.

SCENE I.

The Street outside of MR. STARGAZER'S *house. Two street lamp-posts in front.* TOM GRIG (*with ladder and lantern*), *singing as he enters:*

DAY has gone down o'er the Baltic's proud bil—ler;
Evening has sighed, alas! to the lone wil—ler;
Night hurries on, night hurries on, earth and ocean to kiv—ver;
Rise, gentle moon, rise, gentle moon, and guide me to my——

That ain't a rhyme, that ain't—kiv—ver and lover! I ain't much of a poet, but if I couldn't make better verse than that, I'd undertake to be set fire to and put up, instead of the lamp, before Alderman Waithman's obstacle in Fleet Street. Bil—ler, wil—ler, kiv—ver, shiver, obviously. That's what *I* calls poetry. (*Sings*).

Day has gone down o'er the ocean's proud bil—ler——

[*During the previous speech he has been occupied in lighting one of the lamps. As he is about to light the other,* MR. STARGAZER *appears at window with a telescope.*

MR. STARGAZER (*after spying most intently at the clouds*). Holloa!

TOM (*on ladder*). Sir, to you! And holloa again, if you come to that.

MR. STAR. Have you seen the comet?

TOM. What comet—the Exeter Comet?

MR. STAR. What comet? *The* comet—Halley's comet.

TOM. Nelson's, you mean. I saw it coming out of the yard, not five minutes ago.

MR. STAR. Could you distinguish anything of a tail?

TOM. Distinguish a tail? I believe you—four tails.

MR. STAR. A comet with four tails, and all visible to the naked eye! Nonsense; it couldn't be.

TOM. You wouldn't say that again if you was down here, old Bantam. (*Clock strikes five.*) You'll tell me next, I suppose, that that isn't five o'clock striking, eh?

MR. STAR. Five o'clock—five o'clock. Five o'clock, P.M., on the thirtieth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight. Stop till I come down—stop! Don't go away on any account—not a foot, not a step. [*Closes window.*

TOM (*descending, and shouldering his ladder*). Stop, stop, to a lamplighter, with three hundred and seventy shops and a hundred and twenty private houses waiting to be set a-light to! Stop, to a lamplighter!

As he is running off, enter MR. STARGAZER *from his house, hastily.*

MR. STAR. (*detaining him*). Not for your life—not for your life! The thirtieth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight! Miraculous circumstance! Extraordinary fulfilment of a prediction of the planets!

TOM. What are you talking about?

MR. STAR (*looking about*). Is there nobody else in sight, up the street or down? No, not a soul. This, then, is the man whose coming was revealed to me by the stars six months ago.

TOM. What do you mean?

MR. STAR. Young man, that I have consulted the Book of Fate with rare and wonderful success—that coming events have cast their shadows before.

TOM. Don't talk nonsense to me. I ain't an event; I'm a lamplighter.

MR. STAR. (*aside*). True. Strange destiny that one, announced by the planets as of noble birth, should be devoted to so humble an occupation. (*Aloud.*) But you were not *always* a lamplighter?

TOM. Why, no. I wasn't born with a ladder on my left shoulder, and a light in my other hand. But I took to it very early, though—I had it from my uncle.

MR. STAR. (*aside*). He had it from his uncle. How plain, and yet how forcible, is his language! He speaks of lamplighting as though it were the whooping cough or measles. (*To him.*) Ay?

TOM. Yes, he was the original. You should have known him—'cod! he was a genius, if ever there was one. Gas was the death of him. When gas-lamps were first talked of, my uncle draws himself up and says, "I'll not believe it—there's no such a thing," he says. "You might as well talk of laying on an everlasting succession of glow-worms." But when they made the experiment of lighting a piece of Pall Mall——

MR. STAR. That was when it first came up?

TOM. No, no; that was when it was first laid down. Don't mind me, I can't help a joke now and then. My uncle was sometimes took that way. When the experiment was made of lighting a piece of Pall Mall, and he had actually witnessed it with his own eyes, you should have seen my uncle then.

MR. STAR. So much overcome?

TOM. Overcome, sir! He fell off his ladder, from weakness, fourteen times that very night; and his last fall was into a wheelbarrow that was going his way, and humanely took him home. "I foresee in this," he says, "the breaking up of our profession: no more polishing of the tin reflectors," he says; "no more fancy work in the way of clipping the cottons at two o'clock in the morning; no more going the rounds to trim by daylight, and dribbling down of the *ile* on the hats and bonnets of the ladies and gentlemen, when one feels in good spirits. Any low fellow can light a gas-lamp, and it's all up." So he petitioned the Government for—what do you call that that they give to people when it's found out that they've never been of any use, and have been paid too much for doing nothing?

MR. STAR. Compensation?

TOM. Yes, that's the thing—compensation. They didn't give him any, though. And then he got very fond of his country all at once, and went about saying how that the bringing in of gas was a death-blow to his native land; and how that its *ile* and cotton trade was gone for ever, and the whales would go and kill themselves privately, in spite and vexation at not being caught. After this he was right-down cracked, and called his 'bacco-pipe a gas-pipe, and thought his tears was lamp-*ile*, and all manner of nonsense. At last he went and hung himself on a lamp-iron in St. Martin's Lane, that he'd always been very fond of; and as he was a remarkably good husband, and had never had any secrets from his wife, he put a note in the twopenny post as he went along, to tell the widder where the body was.

MR. STAR. (*laying his hand upon his arm, and speaking mysteriously*). Do you remember your parents?

TOM. My mother I do very well.

MR. STAR. Was she of noble birth?

TOM. Pretty well. She was in the mangling line. Her mother came of a highly respectable family—*such* a business in the sweetstuff and hardbake way.

MR. STAR. Perhaps your father was——

TOM. Why, I hardly know about him. The fact is, there was some little doubt at the time who *was* my father. Two or three young gentlemen were paid the pleasing compliment, but their incomes being limited, they were compelled delicately to decline it.

MR. STAR. Then the prediction is not fulfilled merely in part, but entirely and completely. Listen, young man—I am acquainted with all the celestial bodies——

TOM. Are you, though? I hope they are quite well—everybody.

MR. STAR. Don't interrupt me. I am versed in the great sciences of astronomy and astrology. In my house, there, I have every description of apparatus for observing the course and motion of the planets. I'm writing a work about them, which will consist of eighty-four volumes, imperial quarto, and an appendix nearly twice as long. I read what's going to happen in the stars.

TOM. Read what's going to happen in the stars! Will anything particular happen in the stars in the course of next week, now?

MR. STAR. You don't understand me. I read in the stars what's going to happen here. Six months ago I derived from this source the knowledge that, precisely as the clock struck five on the afternoon of this very day, a stranger would present himself before my enraptured sight—that stranger would be a man of illustrious and high descent—that stranger would be the destined husband of my young and lovely niece, who is now beneath that roof (*points to his house*). That stranger is yourself. I receive you with open arms!

TOM. Me! I the man of illustrious and high——I the husband of a young and lovely—oh! it can't be, you know. The stars have made a mistake—the comet has put 'em out.

MR. STAR. Impossible! The characters were as plain as pike-staves. The clock struck five—you were here—there was not a soul in sight—a mystery envelopes your birth—you are a man of noble aspect. Does not everything combine to prove the accuracy of my observations?

TOM. Upon my word, it looks like it. And now I come to think of it, I have very often felt as if I wasn't the small beer I was taken for. And yet I don't know—you're quite sure about the noble aspect?

MR. STAR. Positively certain.

TOM. Give me your hand.

MR. STAR. And my heart too.

[*They shake hands heartily.*

TOM. The young lady is tolerably good-looking, is she?

MR. STAR. Beautiful! A graceful carriage, an exquisite shape, a sweet voice, a countenance beaming with animation and expression; the eye of a startled fawn.

TOM. I see: a sort of game eye. Does she happen to have any of the—this is quite be-

tween you and me, you know, and I only ask from curiosity, not because I care about it—any of the ready?

MR. STAR. Five thousand pounds. But what of that?—what of that? A word in your ear. I'm in search of the philosophers' stone. I have very nearly found it—not quite. It turns everything to gold; that 's its property.

TOM. What a lot of property it must have!

MR. STAR. When I get it, we 'll keep it in the family. Not a word to any one! What will money be to us? We shall never be able to spend it fast enough.

TOM. Well, you know, we can but try—I 'll do my best endeavours.

MR. STAR. Thank you, thank you! But I 'll introduce you to your future bride at once—this way, this way!

TOM. What, without going my rounds first?

MR. STAR. Certainly. A man in whom the planets take especial interest, and who is about to have a share in the philosophers' stone, descend to lamplighting!

TOM. Perish the base idea! not by no means! I 'll take in my tools, though, to prevent any kind inquiries after me at your door. (*As he shoulders the ladder the sound of* VIOLENT RAIN *is heard.*) Halloa!

MR. STAR. (*putting his hand on his head, in amazement*). What 's that?

TOM. It 's coming down, rather.

MR. STAR. Rain!

TOM. Ah! and a soaker too.

MR. STAR. It can't be—it 's impossible! (*Taking a book from his pocket, and turning over the pages hurriedly.*) Look here—here it is—here 's the weather almanack—"Set fair,"—I knew it couldn't be (*with great triumph*).

TOM (*turning up his collar as the* RAIN INCREASES). Don't you think there 's a dampness in the atmosphere?

MR. STAR. (*looking up*). It 's singular. It 's *like* rain.

TOM. Uncommonly like.

MR. STAR. It 's a mistake in the elements, somehow. Here it is, "set fair," and set fair it ought to be. "Light clouds floating about." Ah, you see, there are no light clouds. The weather 's all wrong.

TOM. Don't you think we had better get under cover?

MR. STAR. (*slowly retreating towards the house*). I don't acknowledge that it has any right to rain, mind. I protest against this. If Nature goes on in this way I shall lose all respect for her. It won't do, you know. It ought to have been two degrees colder yesterday, and, instead of that, it was warmer. This is not the way to treat scientific men. I protest against it.

[*Exeunt into house, both talking,* TOM *pushing* STARGAZER *on, and the latter continually turning back to declaim against the weather.*

SCENE II.

A Room in STARGAZER'S *house.* BETSY, MARTIN, EMMA, STARGAZER, FANNY BROWN, *and* GALILEO, *all murmuring together as they enter.*

BETSY. I say again, young ladies, that it 's shameful—unbearable!

ALL. Oh! shameful! shameful!

BETSY. Marry Miss Emma to a great, old, ugly, doting, dreaming As-tron-o-magician like Mr. Mooney, who 's always winking and blinking through telescopes and that, and can't see a pretty face when it 's under his very nose!

GALILEO (*with a melancholy air*). There never was a pretty face under *his* nose, Betsy, leastways, since I 've known him. He 's very plain.

BETSY. Ah! there 's poor young master too; he hasn't even spirits enough left to laugh at his own jokes. I 'm sure I pity him from the very bottom of my heart.

FANNY *and* EMMA. Poor fellow!

GALILEO. Ain't I a legitimate subject for pity? Ain't it a dreadful thing that I, that am twenty-one come next Lady Day, should be treated like a little boy?—and all because my father is so busy with the moon's age, that he don't care about mine, and so much occupied in making observations on the sun round which the earth revolves, that he takes no notice of the son that revolves round him! I wasn't taken out of nankeen frocks and trousers till I became quite unpleasant in 'em.

ALL. What a shame!

GALILEO. I wasn't, indeed. And look at me now—here 's a state of things. Is this a suit of clothes for a major — at least, for a gentleman who is a minor now, but will be a major on the very next Lady Day that comes? Is this a fit——

ALL (*interrupting him*). Certainly not!

GALILEO (*vehemently*). I won't stand it. I won't submit to it any longer. I *will* be married.

ALL. No, no, no! don't be rash.

GALILEO. I will, I tell you. I 'll marry my cousin Fanny. Give me a kiss, Fanny, and Emma and Betsy will look the other way the while. (*Ki ses her.*) There!

BETSY. Sir, sir! here 's your father coming.

GALILEO. Well, then, I 'll have another, as an antidote to my father. One more, Fanny. [*Kisses her.*

MR. STAR. (*without*). This way, this way. You shall behold her immediately.

Enter MR. STARGAZER, TOM *following bashfully.*

MR. STAR. Where is my——oh, here she is! Fanny, my dear, come here. Do you see that gentleman? [*Aside.*

FANNY. What gentleman, uncle? Do you mean that elastic person yonder, who is bowing with so much perseverance?

MR. STAR. Hush! Yes; that 's the interesting stranger.

FANNY. Why, he is kissing his hand, uncle. What does the creature mean?

MR. STAR. Ah, the rogue! Just like me before I married your poor aunt—all fire and impatience. He means love, my darling, love. I 've such a delightful surprise for you. I didn't tell you before, for fear there should be any mistake; but it 's all right—it 's all right. The stars have settled it all among 'em. He 's to be your husband.

FANNY. My husband, uncle! Goodness gracious, Emma! [*Converses apart with her.*

MR. STAR. (*aside*). He has made a sensation already. His noble aspect and distinguished air have produced an instantaneous impression. Mr. Grig, will you permit me? (*Tom advances awkwardly.*) This is my niece, Mr. Grig—my niece, Miss Fanny Brown. My daughter Emma—Mr. Thomas Grig, the favourite of the planets.

TOM. I hope I see Miss Hemmer in a convivial state. (*Aside to* MR. STARGAZER.) I say, I don't know which is which.

MR. STAR. (*aside*). The young lady nearest here is your affianced bride. Say something appropriate.

TOM. Certainly; yes, of course. Let me see. Miss—(*crosses to her*)—I thank 'ee.

[*Kisses her behind his hat. She screams.*

GALILEO (*bursting from* BETSY, *who has been restraining him*). Outrageous insolence! [BETSY *runs off.*

MR. STAR. Halloa, sir, halloa!

TOM. Who is this juvenile salamander, sir?

MR. STAR. My little boy—only my little boy, don't mind him. Shake hands with the gentleman, sir, instantly (*to* GALILEO).

TOM. A very fine boy, indeed; and he does you great credit, sir. How d' ye do, my little man? (*They shake hands,* GALILEO *looking very wrathful, as* TOM *pats him on the head.*) There, that 's very right and proper. "'T is dogs delight to bark and bite;" not young gentlemen, you know. There, there.

MR. STAR. Now let me introduce you to that *sanctum sanctorum*—that hallowed ground—that philosophical retreat where I, the *genius loci*——

TOM. Eh?

MR. STAR. The *genius loci*——

TOM (*aside*). Something to drink, perhaps. Oh, ah! yes, yes.

MR. STAR. —Have made all my greatest and most profound discoveries; where the telescope has almost grown to my eye with constant application, and the glass retort has been shivered to pieces from the ardour with which my experiments have been pursued. There the illustrious Mooney is, even now, pursuing those researches which will enrich us with precious metal and make us masters of the world. Come, Mr. Grig.

TOM. By all means, sir; and luck to the illustrious Mooney, say I—not so much on Mooney's account as for our noble selves.

MR. STAR. Emma!

EMMA. Yes, papa.

MR. STAR. The same day that makes your cousin Mrs. Grig, will make you and that immortal man, of whom we have just now spoken, one.

EMMA. Oh, consider, dear papa——

MR. STAR. You are unworthy of him, I know; but he (kind generous creature) consents to overlook your defects and to take you for my sake—devoted man! Come, Mr. Grig. Galileo Isaac Newton Hamstead!

GALILEO. Well? [*Advancing sulkily.*

MR. STAR. In name, alas! but not in nature; knowing, even by sight, no other planets than the sun and moon. Here is your weekly pocket-money—sixpence. Take it all.

TOM. And don't spend it all at once, my man. Now, sir.

MR. STAR. Now, Mr. Grig. Go first, sir, I beg. [*Exeunt* TOM *and* MR. STARGAZER.

GALILEO. "Come, Mr. Grig." "Go first, Mr. Grig." "Day that makes your cousin Mrs. Grig." I 'll secretly stick a penknife into Mr. Grig, if I live to be three hours older.

FANNY (*on one side of him*). Oh! don't talk in that desperate way, there 's a dear, dear creature.

EMMA (*on the other side*). No, pray do not. It makes my blood run cold to hear you.

GALILEO. Oh, if I was of age!—if I was only of age!—or we could go to Gretna Green at threepence a head, including refreshments and all incidental expenses. But that could never be. Oh, if I was only of age!

FANNY. But what if you were? What could you do then?

GALILEO. Marry you, cousin Fanny. I could marry you then lawfully, and without anybody's consent.

FANNY. You forget that, situated as we are, we could not be married, even if you *were* one and twenty—we have no money.

EMMA. Not even enough for the fees.

GALILEO. Oh! I am sure every Christian clergyman, under such afflicting circumstances, would marry us on credit. The wedding fees might stand over till the first christening, and then we could settle the little bill all together. Oh, why ain't I of age?—why ain't I of age?

Enter BETSY *in haste.*

BETSY. Well, I never could have believed it! There, miss, I wouldn't have believed it if I had dreamt it, even with a bit of bride-cake under my pillow! To dare to go and think of marrying a young lady with five thousand pounds to a common lamplighter!

ALL. A lamplighter?

BETSY. Yes, he 's Tom Grig the lamplighter, and nothing more nor less; and old Mr. Stargazer goes and picks him out of the open street, and brings him in for Miss Fanny's husband, because he pretends to have read something about it in the stars. Stuff and nonsense! I don't believe he knows his letters in the stars, and that 's the truth; or if he 's

got as far as words in one syllable, it 's quite as much as he has.

FANNY. Was such an atrocity ever heard of? I, left with no power to marry without his consent, and he almost possessing the power to force my inclinations.

EMMA. It 's actually worse than my being sacrificed to that odious and detestable Mr. Mooney.

BETSY. Come, miss, it 's not quite so bad as that neither, for Thomas Grig is a young man, and a proper young man enough too, but as to Mr. Mooney—oh, dear! no husband is bad enough in my opinion, miss; but he is worse than nothing—a great deal worse.

FANNY. You seem to speak feelingly about this same Mr. Grig.

BETSY. Oh, dear no, miss, not I. I don't mean to say but what Mr. Grig may be very well in his way, miss; but Mr. Grig and I have never held any communication together, not even so much as how d' ye do. Oh, no, indeed, I have been very careful, miss, as I always am with strangers. I was acquainted with the last lamplighter, miss, but he 's going to be married, and has given up the calling; for the young woman's parents, being very respectable, wished her to marry a literary man, and so he has set up as a bill-sticker. Mr. Grig only came upon this beat at five to-night, miss.

FANNY. Which is a very sufficient reason why you don't know more of him.

BETSY. Well, miss, perhaps it is; and I hope there 's no crime in making friends in this world if we can, miss.

FANNY. Certainly not. So far from it that I most heartily wish you could make something more than a friend of this Mr. Grig, and so lead him to falsify this prediction.

GALILEO. Oh! don't you think you could, Betsy?

EMMA. You could not manage, at the same time, to get any young friend of yours to make something more than a friend of Mr. Mooney, could you, Betsy?

GALILEO. But, seriously, don't you think you could manage to give us all a helping hand together in some way—eh, Betsy?

FANNY. Yes, yes; that would be so delightful. I should be grateful to her for ever. Shouldn't you?

EMMA. Oh, to the very end of my life!

GALILEO. And so should I, you know; and lor! we should make her so rich, when —when we got rich ourselves, shouldn't we?

BOTH. Oh, that we should, of course.

BETSY. Let me see: I don't wish to have Mr. Grig to myself, you know. I don't want to be married.

ALL. No, no, no! of course she don't.

BETSY. I haven't the least idea to put Mr. Grig off this match, you know, for anybody's sake but you young people's. I am going quite *contrairy* to my own feelings, you know.

ALL. Oh, yes, yes. How kind she is!

BETSY. Well, I 'll go over the matter with the young ladies in Miss Emma's room, and if we can think of anything that seems likely to help us, so much the better, and if we can't we 're none the worse. But Master Galileo mustn't come, for he is so horrid jealous of Miss Fanny that I dursn't hardly say anything before him. Why, I declare (*looking off*), there is my gentleman looking about him as if he had lost Mr. Stargazer, and now he turns this way. There—get out of sight. Make haste!

GALILEO. I may see 'em as far as the bottom stair, mayn't I, Betsy?

BETSY. Yes, but not a step farther on any consideration. There, get away softly, so that if he passes here, he may find me alone.

[*They creep gently out.* GALILEO *returns and peeps in.*

GALILEO. Hist, Betsy!

BETSY. Go away, sir. What have you come back for?

GALILEO (*holding out a large pin*). I wish you 'd take an opportunity of sticking this a little way into him for patting me on the head just now.

BETSY. Nonsense! you can't afford to indulge in such expensive amusements as retaliation yet awhile. You must wait till you come into your property, sir. There, get you gone. [*Exit* GALILEO.

Enter TOM GRIG.

TOM (*aside*). I never saw such a scientific file in my days. The enterprising gentleman that drowned himself *to see how it felt* is nothing to him. There he is, just gone down to the bottom of a dry well, in an uncommonly small bucket, to take an extra squint at the stars—they being seen best, I suppose, through the medium of a cold in the head. Halloa! here is a young female of attractive proportions. I wonder, now, whether a man of noble aspect would be justified in tickling her?

[*He advances stealthily, and tickles her under the arm.*

BETSY (*starting*). Eh! what!—lor, sir!

TOM. Don't be alarmed, my intentions are strictly honourable. In other words, I have no intentions whatever.

BETSY. Then you ought to be more careful, Mr. Grig. That was a liberty, sir.

TOM. I know it was. The cause of liberty all over the world—that 's my sentiment. What is your name?

BETSY (*curtseying*). Betsy Martin, sir.

TOM. A name famous both in song and story. Would you have the goodness, Miss Martin, to direct me to that particular apartment wherein the illustrious Mooney is now pursuing his researches?

BETSY (*aside*). A little wholesome fear may not be amiss. (*To him in assumed agitation.*) You are not going into *that* room, Mr. Grig?

TOM. Indeed I am, and I ought to be there now, having promised to join that light of

science, your master (a short six, by-the-bye), outside the door.

BETSY. That dreadful and mysterious chamber. Another victim!

TOM. Victim, Miss Martin?

BETSY. Oh! the awful oath of secresy which binds me not to disclose the perils of that gloomy, hideous room!

TOM (*astonished*). Miss Martin!

BETSY. Such a fine young man—so rosy and fresh coloured, that he should fall into the clutches of that cruel and insatiable monster! I cannot continue to witness such frightful scenes. I must give warning.

TOM. If you have anything to unfold, young woman, have the goodness to give *me* warning at once.

BETSY (*affecting to recover herself*). No, no, Mr. Grig, it 's nothing—it 's—ha! ha! ha! don't mind me, don't mind me; but it certainly is very shocking. No, no, I don't mean that—I mean funny. Yes. Ha! ha! ha!

TOM (*aside, regarding her attentively*). I suspect a trick here—some other lover in the case, who wants to come over the stars—but it won't do. I 'll tell you what, young woman (*to her*), if this is a cloak, you had better try it on elsewhere—in plain English, if you have any object to gain, and think to gain it by frightening *me*, it 's all my eye—and—and—yourself, Miss Martin.

BETSY. Well, then, if you will rush upon your fate—there—(*pointing off*)—that 's the door, at the end of that long passage and across the gravelled yard. The room is built away from the house on purpose.

TOM. I 'll make for it at once, and the first object I inspect through that same telescope, which now and then grows to your master's eye, shall be the moon—the moon, which is the emblem of your inconstant and deceitful sex, Miss Martin.

DUET.—Air—"*The young May moon.*"

TOM. There comes a new moon twelve times a year,
BETSY. And when there is none, all is dark and drear;
TOM. In which I espy,
BETSY. And so, too, do I,
BOTH. A resemblance to womankind very clear.
BOTH. There comes a new moon twelve times a year,
And when there is none, all is dark and drear;
TOM. In which I espy,
BETSY. And so do I,
BOTH. A resemblance to womankind very clear.

Second Verse.

TOM. She changes, she 's fickle, she drives men mad;
BETSY. She comes to bring light, and leaves them sad.
TOM. So restless and wild,
BETSY. But so sweetly mild,
BOTH That no better companion could be had
BOTH. There comes a new moon twelve times a year,
And where there is none, all is dark and drear;
TOM. In which I espy,
BETSY. And so do I,
BOTH. A resemblance to womankind very clear.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A large gloomy Room; a window, with a telescope directed towards the sky without; a table covered with books, instruments, and apparatus, which are also scattered about in other parts of the chamber; a dim lamp, a pair of globes, etc.; a skeleton in a case, and various uncouth objects displayed against the walls. Two doors in flat. MR. MOONEY *discovered, with a very dirty face, busily engaged in blowing a fire, upon which is a crucible.*

Enter MR. STARGAZER *with a lamp, beckoning to* TOM GRIG, *who enters with some unwillingness.*

MR. STAR. This, Mr. Grig, is the *sanctum sanctorum* of which I have already spoken. This is at once the laboratory and observatory.

TOM. It 's not an over-lively place, is it?

MR. STAR. It has an air of solemnity which well accords with the great and mysterious pursuits that are here in constant prosecution, Mr. Grig.

TOM. Ah! I should think it would suit an undertaker to the life; or, perhaps I should rather say, to the death. What may that cheerful object be, now?

[*Pointing to a large phial.*

MR. STAR. That contains a male infant with three heads—we use it in astrology—it is supposed to be a *charm*.

TOM. I shouldn't have supposed it myself from his appearance. The young gentleman isn't alive, is he?

MR. STAR. No, he is preserved in spirits.

[MR. MOONEY *sneezes.*

TOM (*retreating into a corner*). Halloa! What the——(MR. MOONEY *looks vacantly round*). That gentleman, I suppose, is out of spirits?

MR. STAR (*laying his hand upon* TOM'S *arm and looking toward the philosopher*). Hush! that is the gifted Mooney. Mark well his noble countenance. Intense thought beams from every lineament. That is the great astrologer.

TOM. He looks as if he had been having a touch at the black art. I say, why don't he say something?

MR. STAR. He is in a state of abstraction. See, he directs his bellows this way, and blows upon the empty air.

TOM. Perhaps he sees a strange spark in this direction, and wonders how he came here.

I wish he'd blow me out. (*Aside.*) I don't half like this.

MR. STAR. You shall see me rouse him.

TOM. Don't put yourself out of the way on my account. I can make his acquaintance at any other time.

MR. STAR. No time like the time present. Nothing awakes him from these fits of meditation but an electric shock. We always have a strongly charged battery on purpose. I'll give him a shock directly.

[MR. STARGAZER *goes up and cautiously places the end of a wire in* MR. MOONEY'S *hand. He then stoops down beside the table, as though bringing it in contact with the battery.* MR. MOONEY *immediately jumps up with a loud cry, and throws away the bellows.*

TOM (*squaring at the philosopher*). It wasn't me, you know; none of your nonsense.

MR. STAR. (*comes hastily forward*). Mr. Grig—Mr. Grig—not that disrespectful attitude to one of the greatest men that ever lived. This, my friend (*to* MOONEY), is the noble stranger.

MR. MOONEY. Aha!

MR. STAR. Who arrived, punctual to his time, this afternoon

MR. MOONEY. Oho!

MR. STAR. Welcome him, my friend—give him your hand. (MR. MOONEY *appears confused, and raises his leg.*) No, no; that's your foot. So absent, Mr. Grig, in his gigantic meditations, that very often he doesn't know one from the other. Yes, that's your hand. Very good, my dear friend; very good.

[*Pats* MOONEY *on the back as he and* TOM *shake hands, the latter at arms' length.*

MR. STAR. Have you made any more discoveries during my absence?

MR. MOONEY. Nothing particular.

MR. STAR. Do you think—do you think, my dear friend, that we shall arrive at any great stage in our labours, anything at all approaching to their final consummation, in the course of the night?

MR. MOONEY. I cannot take upon myself to say.

MR. STAR. What are your opinions on the subject?

MR. MOONEY. I haven't any opinions upon any subject whatsoever.

MR. STAR. Wonderful man! Here's a mind, Mr. Grig.

TOM. Yes, his conversation's very improving indeed. But what's he staring so hard at me for?

MR. STAR. Something occurs to him. Don't speak—don't disturb the current of his reflections upon any account.

[MR. MOONEY *walks solemnly up to* TOM, *who retreats before him; taking off his hat, turns it over and over with a thoughtful countenance, and finally puts it upon his own head.*

MR. STAR. Eccentric man!

TOM. I say, I hope he don't mean to keep that, because if he does, his eccentricity is unpleasant. Give him another shock and knock it off, will you?

MR. STAR. Hush! hush! not a word.

[MR. MOONEY, *keeping his eyes fixed on* TOM, *slowly returns to* MR. STARGAZER, *and whispers in his ear.*

MR. STAR. Surely; by all means. I took the date of his birth, and all other information necessary for the purpose just now. (*To* TOM.) Mr. Mooney suggests that we should cast your nativity without delay, in order that we may communicate to you your future destiny.

MR. MOONEY. Let us retire for that purpose.

MR. STAR. Certainly, wait here for a few moments.

MR. GRIG. We are only going into the little laboratory, and will return immediately. Now, my illustrious friend.

[*He takes up a lamp, and leads the way to one of the doors. As* MR. MOONEY *follows,* TOM *steals behind him and regains his hat.* MR. MOONEY *turns round, stares, and exit through the door.*

TOM. Well, that's the queerest genius I ever came across—rather a singular person for a little smoking party. (*Looks into the crucible.*) This is the saucepan, I suppose, where they're boiling the philosophers' stone down to the proper consistency. I hope it's nearly done; when it's quite ready, I'll send out for sixpenn'orth of sprats, and turn 'em into gold-fish for a first experiment. 'Cod! it'll be a comfortable thing, though, to have no end to one's riches. I'll have a country house and a park, and I'll plant a bit of it with a double row of gas-lamps a mile long, and go out with a French polished mahogany ladder, and two servants in livery behind me, to light 'em with my own hands every night. What's to be seen here? (*Looks through telescope.*) Nothing particular, the stopper being on at the other end. The little boy with the three heads (*looking towards the case*). What a comfort he must have been to his parents! Halloa! (*taking up a large knife*) this is a disagreeable looking instrument—something too large for bread and cheese, or oysters, and not of a bad shape for sticking live persons. A very dismal place this—I wish they'd come back. Ah! (*coming upon the skeleton*) here's a ghastly object—what does the writing say? (*Reads a label upon the case.*) "Skeleton of a gentleman, prepared by Mr. Mooney." I hope Mr. Mooney may not be in the habit of inviting gentlemen here and making 'em into such preparations without their own consent. Here's a book, now. What's all this about, I wonder? The letters look as if a steam-engine had printed them by accident.

[*Turns over the leaves, spelling to himself.*

GALILEO *enters softly, unseen by* TOM, *who has his back towards him.*

GALILEO (*aside*) Oh! you're there, are

you? If I could but suffocate him, not for life, but only till I am one and twenty, and then revive him, what a comfort and convenience it would be! I overheard my cousin Fanny talking to Betsy about coming here. What can she want here? If she can be false —false to *me!*—it seems impossible; but if she is——well, well, we shall see. If I can reach that lumber-room unseen, Fanny Brown —beware.

[*He steals towards the door on the* L., *opens it, and exit cautiously into the room. As he does so,* TOM *turns the other way.*

TOM (*closing the book*). It's very pretty Greek, I think. What a time they are!

MR. STARGAZER *and* MOONEY *enter from room.*

MOONEY. Tell the noble gentleman of his irrevocable destiny.

MR. STAR. (*with emotion*). No—no; prepare him first.

TOM (*aside*). Prepare him; "prepared by Mr. Mooney." This is a case of kidnapping and slaughter. (*To them.*) Let him prepare me at his peril!

MR. STAR. Mr. Grig, why this demonstration?

TOM. Oh, don't talk to me of demonstrations. You ain't going to demonstrate me, and so I tell you.

MR. STAR. Alas! (*crossing to him*). The truth we have to communicate requires but little demonstration from our feeble lips. We have calculated upon your nativity.

MOONEY. Yes, we have, we have.

MR. STAR. Tender-hearted man! (MOONEY *weeps.*) See there, Mr. Grig, isn't that affecting?

TOM. What is he piping his boiled gooseberry eye for, sir? How should I know whether it's affecting or not?

MR. STAR. For you, for you. We find that you will expire to-morrow two months, at thirty minutes—wasn't it thirty minutes, my friend?

MOONEY. Thirty-five minutes, twenty-seven seconds, and five-sixths of a second. Oh! [*Groans.*

MR. STAR. Thirty-five minutes, twenty-seven seconds, and five-sixths of a second past nine o'clock.

MOONEY. A M.

[*They both wipe their eyes.*

TOM (*alarmed*). Don't tell me. You've made a mistake somewhere. I won't believe it.

MOONEY. No, it is all correct; we worked it all in the most satisfactory manner. Oh! [*Groans again.*

TOM. Satisfactory, sir! Your notions of the satisfactory are of an extraordinary nature.

MR. STAR. (*producing a pamphlet*). It is confirmed by the prophetic almanack. Here is the prediction for to-morrow two months —"The decease of a great person may be looked for about this time."

TOM (*dropping into his chair*). That's me! It's all up! Inter me decently, my friends.

MR. STAR. (*shaking his hand*). Your wishes shall be attended to. We must have the marriage with my niece at once, in order that your distinguished race may be transmitted to posterity. Condole with him, my Mooney, while I compose my feelings, and settle the preliminaries of the marriage in solitude.

[*Takes up lamp and exit into room* R. MOONEY *draws up a chair in a line with* TOM, *a long way off. They both sigh heavily.* GALILEO *opens the lumber-room door. As he does so the room door opens and* BETSY *steals softly in, beckoning to* EMMA *and* FANNY, *who follow. He retires again, abruptly.*

BETSY (*aside*). Now, young ladies, if you take heart only for one minute, you may frighten Mr. Mooney out of being married at once.

EMMA. But if he has serious thoughts?

BETSY. Nonsense, miss! he hasn't any thoughts. Your papa says to him, "Will you marry my daughter?" And he says "Yes, I will." And he would, and will, if you ain't bold; but, bless you, he never turned it over in his mind for a minute. If you, miss (*to* EMMA), pretend to hate him and love a rival; and you, miss (*to* FANNY), to love him to distraction, you'll frighten him so betwixt you that he'll declare off directly, I warrant. The love will frighten him quite as much as the hate. He never saw a woman in a passion, and as to one in love, I don't believe that anybody but his mother ever kissed that grumpy old face of his in all his born days. Now, do try him, ladies. Come, we're losing time.

[*She conceals herself behind the skeleton-case.* EMMA *rushes up to* TOM GRIG *and embraces him, while* FANNY *clasps* MOONEY *round the neck.* GALILEO *appears at his door in an attitude of amazement, and* MR. STARGAZER *at his, after running in again with the lamp, which before he sees what is going forward he had in his hand.* TOM *and* MOONEY *in great astonishment.*

FANNY (*to* MOONEY). } Hush! hush!
EMMA (*to* GRIG). }

[TOM GRIG *and* MOONEY *get their heads sufficiently out of the embrace to exchange a look of wonder.*

EMMA. Dear Mr. Grig, I know you must consider this strange, extraordinary, unaccountable conduct.

TOM. Why, ma'am, without explanation, it does appear singular.

EMMA. Yes, yes; I know it does—I know it will; but the urgency of the case must plead my excuse. Too fascinating Mr. Grig, I have seen you once, and only once, but the impression of that maddening interview can never be effaced. I love you to distraction.

[*Falls upon his shoulder.*

TOM. You're extremely obliging, ma'am.

It 's a flattering sort of thing—or it would be (*aside*) if I was going to live a little longer—but you 're not the one, ma'am. It 's the other lady that the stars have——

FANNY (*to* MOONEY). Nay, wonderful being, hear me. This is not a time for false conventional delicacy. Wrapt in your sublime visions, you have not [observed] the silent tokens of a woman's first and all-absorbing attachment, which have been, I fear, but too perceptible in the eyes of others. But now I must speak out. I hate this odious man. You are my first and only love. Oh, speak to me.

MOONEY. I haven't anything appropriate to say, young woman. I think I had better go. [*Attempting to get away.*

FANNY. Oh, no, no, no (*detaining him*). Give me some encouragement. Not one kind word? not one look of love?

MOONEY. I don't know how to look a look of love. I 'm—I 'm frightened.

TOM. So am I. I don't understand this. I tell you, miss, that the other lady is my destined wife. Upon my word you musn't hug me, you 'll make her jealous.

FANNY. Jealous of you? Hear me (*to* MOONEY). I renounce all claim or title to the hand of that or any other man, and vow to be eternally and wholly yours.

MOONEY. No, don't; you can't be mine—nobody can be mine. I don't want anybody. I—I——

EMMA. If you will not hear her, hear *me*, detested monster. Hear me declare that sooner than be your bride, with this deep passion for another rooted in my heart, I——

MOONEY. You need not make any declaration on the subject, young woman.

MR. STAR (*coming forward*). She shan't—she shan't. That 's right; don't hear her. She shall marry you whether she likes it or not—she shall marry you to-morrow morning—and you, miss (*to* FANNY), shall marry Mr. Grig if I trundle you to church in a wheelbarrow.

GALILEO (*coming forward*). So she shall! so she may! Let her! let her! I give her leave.

MR. STAR. You give her leave, you young dog? Who the devil cares whether *you* give her leave or not? and what are you spinning about in that way for?

GALILEO. I 'm fierce; I 'm furious. Don't talk to me. I shall do somebody a mischief. I 'll never marry anybody after this, never, never; it isn't safe. I 'll live and die a bachelor—there!—a bachelor!—a bachelor!

[*He goes up and encounters* BETSY. *She talks to him apart, and his wrath seems gradually to subside.*

MOONEY. The little boy, albeit of tender years, has spoken wisdom. I have been led to the contemplation of womankind. I find their love is too violent for my staid habits. I would rather not venture upon the troubled waters of matrimony.

MR. STAR. You don't mean to marry my daughter? Not if I say she *shall* have you? (MOONEY *shakes his head solemnly.*) Mr. Grig, you have not changed your mind because of a little girlish folly?

TOM. To-morrow two months. I may as well get through as much gold as I can in the meantime. Why, sir, if the pot nearly boils (*pointing to the crucible*)—if you 're pretty near the philosophers' stone——

MR. STAR. Pretty near. We're sure of it—certain; it 's as good as money in the bank.

[GALILEO *and* BETSY, *who have been listening attentively, bustle about, fanning the fire, and throwing in sundry powders from the bottles on the table, then cautiously retire to a distance.*

TOM. If that 's the case, sir, I am ready to keep faith with the planets. I 'll take her, sir; I 'll take her.

MR. STAR. Then here 's her hand, Mr. Grig—no resistance, miss (*drawing* FANNY *forward*). It 's of no use, so you may as well do it with a good grace. Take her hand, Mr. Grig. [*The crucible blows up with a loud crash; they all start.*

MR. STAR. What!—the labour of fifteen years destroyed in an instant!

MOONEY (*stooping over the fragments*). That 's the only disappointment I have experienced in this process since I was first engaged in it when I was a boy. It always blows up when it 's on the point of succeeding.

TOM. Is the philosophers' stone gone?

MOONEY. No.

TOM. Not gone, sir?

MOONEY. No; it never came.

MR. STAR. But we 'll get it, Mr. Grig. Don't be cast down. We shall discover it in less than fifteen years this time, I daresay.

TOM (*relinquishing* FANNY'S *hand*). Ah! were the stars very positive about this union?

MR. STAR. They had not a doubt about it. They said it *was* to be, and it must be. They were peremptory.

TOM. I am sorry for that, because they have been very civil to me in the way of showing a light now and then, and I really regret disappointing 'em; but, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it can't be.

MR. STAR. Can't be, Mr. Grig! What can't be?

TOM. The marriage, sir. I forbid the banns. [*Retires and sits down.*

MR. STAR. Impossible! Such a prediction unfulfilled! Why, the consequences would be as fatal as those of a concussion between the comet and this globe. Can't be—it must be—it shall be!

BETSY (*coming forward, followed by* GALILEO). If you please, sir, may I say a word?

MR. STAR. What have you got to say? Speak, woman!

BETSY. Why, sir, I don't think Mr. Grig is the right man.

MR. STAR. What!

BETSY. Don't you recollect, sir, that just as the house clock struck the first stroke of

five, you gave Mr. Galileo a thump on the head with the butt end of your telescope, and told him to get out of the way?

MR. STAR. Well, if I did, what of that?

BETSY Why, then, sir, I say, and I would say it if I were to be killed for it, that he 's the young gentleman that ought to marry Miss Fanny, and that the stars never meant anything else.

MR. STAR. He? Why, he 's a little boy.

GALILEO. I ain't; I'm one and twenty next Lady Day.

MR. STAR. Eh? Eighteen hundred and—why, so he is, I declare. He 's quite a stranger to me, certainly. I never thought about his age since he was fourteen, and I remember that birthday, because he 'd a new suit of clothes then. But the noble family——

BETSY. Lor, sir! ain't it being of noble family to be the son of such a clever man as you?

MR. STAR. That 's true. And my mother's father would have been lord mayor, only he died of turtle the year before.

BETSY. Oh! it 's quite clear.

MR. STAR. The only question is about the time, because the church struck afterwards. But I should think the stars, taking so much interest in my house, would most likely go by the house clock, eh, Mooney?

MOONEY. Decidedly—yes.

MR. STAR. Then you may have her, my son. Her father was a great astronomer, so I hope that, though you *are* a blockhead, your children may be scientific. There.

[*Joins their hands.*

EMMA. Am I free to marry who I like, papa?

MR. STAR. Won't you, Mooney? Won't you?

MOONEY. If anybody asks me again, I 'll run away, and never come back any more.

MR. STAR. Then we must drop the subject. Yes, your choice is now unfettered.

EMMA. Thank you, dear papa. Then I 'll look about for somebody who will suit me without the delay of an instant longer than is absolutely necessary.

MR. STAR. How very dutiful!

FANNY. And, as my being here just now with Emma was a little trick of Betsy's, I hope you 'll forgive her, uncle.

EMMA. } Oh, yes, do!
GALILEO. }

FANNY. And even reward her, uncle, for being instrumental in fulfilling the prediction.

EMMA. } Oh, yes; do reward her, do!
GALILEO. }

FANNY. Perhaps you could find a husband for her, uncle, you know. Don't you understand?

BETSY. Pray don't mention it, miss. I told you at first, miss, that I had not the least wish or inclination to have Mr. Grig to myself. I couldn't abear that Mr. Grig should think I wanted him to marry me. Oh, no, miss; not on any account.

MR. STAR. Oh, that 's pretty intelligible. Here, Mr. Grig. (*They fall back from his chair.*) Have you any objection to take this young woman for better, for worse?

BETSY. Lor', sir, how ondelicate!

MR. STAR. I 'll add a portion of ten pounds for your loss of time here to-night. What do you say, Mr. Grig?

TOM. It don t much matter. I ain't long for this world. Eight weeks of marriage might reconcile me to my fate. I should go off, I think, more resigned and peaceful. Yes, I 'll take her as a reparation. Come to my arms.

[*He embraces her with a dismal face.*

MR. STAR. (*taking a paper from his pocket*). Egad! that reminds me of what I came back to say, which all this bustle drove out of my head There 's a figure wrong in the nativity (*handing the paper to* MOONEY). He 'll live to a green old age.

TOM (*looking up*). Eh? What?

MOONEY. So he will Eighty-two years and twelve days will be the lowest.

TOM (*disengaging himself*). Eh! here! (*calling off*). Hallo, you, sir! bring in that ladder and lantern.

A Servant *enters in great haste, and hands them to* TOM.

SERVANT. There 's such a row in the street —none of the gas-lamps lit, and all the people calling for the lamplighter. *Such* a row!

[*Rubbing his hands with glee.*

TOM. Is there, my fine fellow? Then I 'll go and light 'em. And as, under existing circumstances, and with the prospect of a green old age before me, I 'd rather *not* be married, Miss Martin, I beg to assure the ratepayers present, that in future I shall pay the strictest attention to my professional duties, and do my best for the contractor; and that I shall be found upon my beat as long as they condescend to patronize the Lamplighter.

[*Runs off.* MISS MARTIN *faints in the arms of* MOONEY.

THE END.

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